

THEMATIC CONTINUITY AND MELODIC RECYCLING IN HERBERT HOWELLS'S SONATA
FOR OBOE AND PIANO (1942)

by

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Chapter 1: BIOGRAPHY AND COMPOSITIONAL STYLE

Biography

Herbert Norman Howells was born October 17, 1892, in Lydney, Gloucestershire, England, the youngest of Oliver and Elizabeth Burgham Howells's eight children. The family survived on the meager income from his father's plumbing business. Young Howells was undoubtedly exposed to music from an early age, as he often accompanied his father to his organist duties at the Baptist chapel adjacent to their home. Howells later remarked, "My father was a very humble businessman for six days of seven, and a dreadful organist for the seventh day."¹ His older sister Florence was his first piano teacher.

Howells would draw on his relationship with the Gloucestershire countryside of his childhood for inspiration. He attended Dame's School (1896-98) and Church of England Elementary School (1898-1905) before earning a scholarship to Lydney Grammar School (1905-08). There, Howells received his first recognition for his musical aptitude, composing and adapting music for school activities.² By means of patronage from Charles³ and Mary Bathurst, Howells began weekly private study with Alfred Herbert Brewer (1865-1928), organist of the Gloucester Cathedral. Howells also worked as a chorister and assistant organist at the Parish Church of St. Mary, Lydney.

In 1909, again with the help of the Bathursts, Brewer accepted Howells as an articulated pupil at the cathedral.⁴ Howells was organist for Aylburton Church, Gloucestershire, a position he would keep for several years.⁵ At the 1910 Three Choirs Festival held at Gloucester, Howells attended the premier performance of Ralph Vaughan Williams's (1872-1958) *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis*; the experience was deeply moving and formative.⁶ Howells and Vaughan Williams developed a mutual

¹ Paul Spicer, *Herbert Howells*, (Bridgend, Wales: Seren, 1998), 9.

² Peter John Hodgson, "The Music of Herbert Howells" (PhD diss., University of Colorado, 1970), 5, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

³ Charles Bathurst (1867-1958), Squire and First Viscount Bledisloe of Lydney.

⁴ Spicer, 17.

⁵ Hodgson, 7.

⁶ Spicer, 22.

affinity and life-long friendship. Howells admired Vaughan Williams's use of English musical sources, straight-forwardness, and particular aesthetic mood.⁷ His time at the cathedral also yielded another important friendship in student Ivor Gurney (1890-1937). When Gurney left Gloucester in 1911 to study at the Royal College of Music, he persuaded Howells to do the same.⁸ Howells left Gloucester and Brewer to devote himself to composition and the ambition of studying with Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924).⁹ This period of self-instruction yielded the works which won him an open scholarship to the Royal College of Music: Sonata in B Minor, HH 24 [violin and piano]; Sonata in C Minor, HH 25 [organ]; *Five Songs*, HH 26 [low voice and piano]; *Summer Idyls*, HH 27 [piano].

Howells would remain at the Royal College of Music until 1917. His principal teachers included Walford Davies (1869-1941), choral techniques; Walter Parratt (1841-1924), organ; Hubert Hastings Parry (1848-1918), history and literature; Charles Villiers Stanford, composition; Charles Wood (1866-1926), harmony and counterpoint. Howells would later earn Bachelor of Music (1934) and Doctor of Music (1937) degrees from the University of Oxford.¹⁰

In 1917, Howells was diagnosed with Graves' Disease, a thyroid autoimmune disease, which at the time was fatal. Howells had only just taken a position as Sub-organist at Salisbury Cathedral in March of 1917 and had to resign due to his health in September, but this kept him from military conscription.¹¹ He was given a prognosis of six months to live, but underwent an experimental treatment of radium injections. The treatment, though successful, left him weak. Nevertheless, this period of convalescence was prolific, yielding many important compositions: String Quartet No. 3, *In Gloucestershire*, Op. 34, HH 62; Quartet in A Minor, Op. 21, HH 66 [violin, viola, cello, and piano]; *Fantasy String Quartet*, Op. 25, HH 66; Three Pieces, Op. 26, HH 83 [violin and piano]; "King David",

⁷ Hodgson, 8-9.

⁸ Christopher Palmer, *Herbert Howells: A Celebration*, 2nd ed. (London: Thames, 1996), 34-51. HH's & Gurney's correspondence.

⁹ Hodgson, 9.

¹⁰ Ibid., 27

¹¹ Ibid., 16.

HH 102 [voice and piano]; Rhapsodic Quintet, Op. 31, HH 107 [clarinet and string quartet]; “A Spotless Rose:” carol-anthem, HH 109 [SATB].

In 1920, Howells married singer Dorothy Eveline Goozee Dawe. Howells accompanied her and wrote several pieces for her. Together they had two children, Ursula Mary (1922-2005) and Michael Kendrick (1926-35), and were married fifty-five years. Tragically, Michael would die in 1935 of bulbar poliomyelitis, and his death would cast a long shadow over Howells, personally and professionally.¹² Though not directly involved in the war effort, Howells knew many who served. His house was destroyed in blitz bombing in September, 1940. No one was home at the time, but his library of manuscripts, scores, and books was lost.¹³ Howells’s next and last house at 3 Beverly Close, Barnes Common, London bears a plaque commemorating its former occupant.¹⁴

Howells’s career as a teacher began in 1920 with his appointment to the Royal College of Music. For the next fifty-nine years, Howells was devoted to developing his students’ self-discovery and self-determination.¹⁵ Howells additionally taught at Morley College, London (1925-28), St. Paul’s Girls’ School, London (1936-62), and the University of London (1954-64). Howells believed in the value of amateur music-making and frequently adjudicated competitions. He developed a demand as a jurist because of his excellent writing and incisive commentary.¹⁶

Howells contributed a considerable amount of commentary in writing and radio broadcasting. He was careful to distinguish his commentaries thusly, “Analysis of fine music is a dusty pursuit, and in the last resort profitless.”¹⁷ In an article on Vaughan Williams’s ‘Pastoral’ Symphony, Howells was more emphatic:

¹² Byron Adams, “Musical Cenotaph: Howells’s *Hymnus paradisi* and Sites of Mourning,” in *The Music of Herbert Howells*, ed. Phillip A. Cooke and David Maw (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), 285.

¹³ Palmer, *Celebration*, 89.

¹⁴ “3 Beverley Cl, London, SW13 0EH, UK,” Google Maps, <https://goo.gl/maps/3xXQN1HnLRm>.

¹⁵ Hodgson, 20.

¹⁶ Palmer, *Celebration*, 238. My favorite of Howells’s comments, intended to calm nervous performers: “To make your audience comfortable is a sign of good manners.”

¹⁷ Palmer, *Celebration*, 313.

A few people there are who regard attempted analysis as attempted murder. It is true that with words one can describe the shape of a tune, but not convey a sense of its practical emotional effect; that texture can be analysed to some extent, but its quality be known only through the living sounds. Yet there is a taint of humbug in the wholesale condemnation of attempts to examine the means by which a composer attains his ends. In the end all works are subjected to analysis; and not without real profit. But knowledge so gained is, or ought to be, only complementary.¹⁸

Howells was recognized for his eloquence, and his friend and fellow composer Arthur Bliss (1891-1975) hired him to help with music programs for the BBC.¹⁹

During the Second World War, Howells served as deputy organist at St. John's College, University of Cambridge (1941-45). This was his first return to organist duties since his position in Salisbury was ended due to illness. He took the position in addition to his other responsibilities at the Royal College of Music, St. Paul's Girls' School, and adjudicating. In August of 1942, Howells completed his Sonata for Oboe and Piano for oboist Léon Goossens. Many writers acknowledged how Howells was extremely self-critical and suppressed his output. A number of his compositions were unfinished, lost, or unpublished. Because his primary income was from teaching, Howells was not under financial pressure to compose. This may have contributed to his reticence. Howells is principally known for his music for choir, organ, solo songs, and music for the Anglican Rite. Yet despite so much time in and around the church, Howells was not religious. He told Ursula he could not reconcile Michael's death with a "merciful God acting in his wisdom," nor could he believe in an afterlife or the chance of reunion with Michael.²⁰

Howells, though lesser known with the public, was well-regarded amongst his colleagues. Honors bestowed include being named Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire [CBE] (1955), the third John Collard Life Fellow (1959), honorary Doctor of Music, Cambridge (1961),

¹⁸ Herbert Howells, "Vaughan Williams's 'Pastoral' Symphony," *Music & Letters* 3, no. 2 (April 1922): 132.

¹⁹ Spicer, 130.

²⁰ Spicer, 110.

and to the Order of the Companions of Honour (1973).²¹ Howells died on February 23, 1983 in London; his ashes are interred at Westminster Abbey near his friend Vaughan Williams and teacher Stanford.²²

²¹ Palmer, *Celebration*, 85.

²² Westminster Abbey, "Herbert Howells," accessed May 9, 2017, <https://www.westminster-abbey.org/abbey-commemorations/commemorations/herbert-howells>.

Table 1. Timeline of Howells's life events and important compositions

1892	Born October 17, Lydney, Gloucestershire, England
1896-98	Attended Dame's School
1898-1905	Attended Church of England Elementary School
1905	With patronage of Charles and Mary Bathurst, began piano study with Alfred Herbert Brewer.
1905-08	Attended Lydney Grammar School; made responsible for collective music-making. Worked as chorister and assistant organist at Parish Church of St. Mary, Lydney.
1907	Heard G. F. Handel's <i>Messiah</i> at Gloucester Cathedral
ca.1909	Organist, Aylburton Church, Gloucestershire
1910	Heard Ralph Vaughan Williams's <i>Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis</i> at the Three Choirs Festival, an immensely formative experience.
1909-11	Articled pupil of Brewer at Gloucester Cathedral
1912-17	Attended Royal College of Music; studied with Walford Davies (choral techniques), Walter Parratt (organ), Hubert Hastings Parry (history and literature), Charles Villiers Stanford (composition), and Charles Wood (harmony and counterpoint).
1912	<i>Missa sine nomine</i> (<i>Mass in the Dorian Mode</i>), Op. 2, HH 28 [SATB]. First substantial work written under Stanford.
1914	Suite for Orchestra, <i>The Bs</i> , Op. 13, HH 42
1915-17	Contributing writer to <i>The Atheneum</i>
1916-30s	String Quartet No. 3, <i>In Gloucestershire</i> , Op. 34, HH 62
1917	[March-September] Sub-organist, Salisbury Cathedral
1917-20	Underwent treatment for Graves' Disease; period of convalescence. Hired to edit Tudor and Elizabethan music by the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust.
1917	<i>Fantasy String Quartet</i> , Op. 25, HH 71
1917	<i>Sir Patrick Spens</i> : traditional ballad, Op. 23, HH 77 [baritone, SATB, orchestra]
1917	Sonata No. 1 in E Major, Op. 18, HH 78 [violin, piano]
1917	Sonata No. 2 in E \flat Major, Op. 26, HH 79 [violin, piano]
1919	<i>Rhapsodic Quintet</i> , Op. 31, HH 107 [clarinet, string quartet]

1919	‘A Spotless Rose’: carol-anthem, HH 109 [SATB]
1919-73	<i>A Garland for de la Mare</i> , HH 111 [voice, piano]
1920-79	Professor of Composition, Royal College of Music
1920	‘O Garlands, Hanging by the Doors,’ HH 121 [voice, piano]
1920-25	Editor, Royal College of Music Magazine
1922	<i>Sine nomine: A Phantasy</i> , Op. 37, HH 126 [soprano, tenor, SATB, orchestra]
1923	Sonata No. 3, Op. 38, HH 136 [violin, piano]
1925-28	Teacher, Morley College, London
1927	<i>Lambert’s Clavichord</i> , Op. 41, HH 165 [clavichord]
1928	<i>In Green Ways</i> , Op. 43, HH 172 [high voice, orchestra or piano]
1932	Requiem, HH 188 [SATB]
1933	<i>A Kent Yeoman’s Wooing Song</i> : a cantata, HH 192 [soprano, baritone, SATB, orchestra]
1934	Bachelor of Music, University of Oxford
1935	Son, Michael Kendrick Howells, dies of bulbar poliomyelitis
1936-62	Music Director, St. Paul Girls’ School, London
1937	Doctor of Music, University of Oxford
1938-50	<i>Hymnus paradisi</i> , HH 220 [soprano, tenor, SATB, orchestra]
1939-45	<i>Six Pieces for Organ</i> , HH 226
1941-45	Deputy Organist, St. John’s College, London
1941-61	<i>Howells’ Clavichord</i> , HH 237 [clavichord]
1942	Sonata for Oboe and Piano, HH 239
1946	Sonata for Clarinet and Piano, HH 251
1954-64	King Edward Professor of Music, University of London
1954	<i>Missa sabrinensis</i> , HH 275 [SATB soli, SATB, orchestra]
1955	Named Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (CBE)

1959	Named third John Collard Life Fellow
1961	Honorary Doctor of Music, University of Cambridge
1964	<i>Take Him, Earth, for Cherishing</i> , HH 307 [SATB]
1973	Named to the Order of the Companions of Honour (CH)
1975	Sonata for Flute and Piano, HH 346, <i>incomplete</i>
1983	Died at Gwendolyn Nursing Home, Putney, London. Ashes interred at Westminster Abbey.

Compositional Style

Howells's long working life is generally divided into two periods. The first, 1910-34, was distinctly non-religious and characterized by successful instrumental works (chamber and orchestral) and songs (solo and part). The second, 1935-78, consisted primarily of music for the church and choir. These dates also correspond to the periods before and after his son's death. Howells's oeuvre includes 381 cataloged works, 133 of which are unpublished and/or lost as of 2013.²³ Solo sonatas account for less than two percent of Howells's total output: four for violin and piano (HH 24, 78, 79, 136), organ (HH 25), oboe and piano (HH 239), clarinet and piano (HH 251), and an incomplete sonata for flute and piano (HH 346).

Howells's compositions spanned the majority of the twentieth century (1910-78), during which he was consistent in his use of traditional compositional techniques. David Willcocks remarked, "At a time when composers, in a search for novel means of musical expression, have been experimenting with serialism, aleatory techniques and electronic music, Herbert Howells has found new things to say using conventional methods of composition."²⁴ Howells pushed tonal and modal harmony to its limit but never broke it. He allowed structure (form) to arise from melody, and he saturated his works with considerable detail.

Tudor music and folk song were sources of inspiration, but Howells rarely quoted outside sources in his compositions.²⁵ The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were a period of resurgent interest in nationalism. The so-called English Revival prioritized non-Teutonic sources, folk song, and ideology of the English countryside and pastoral scenery.²⁶ Howells said,

all through my life I've had this strange feeling that I belonged somehow to the Tudor period – not only musically but in every way. Ralph Vaughan Williams even had a theory that I was the reincarnation of one of the lesser Tudor luminaries. ...Ralph and I felt and reacted to things musically in a very similar way, and if some of our works are alike in any respect, it's not, I think,

²³ These numbers are based on Howells's complete catalog found in Cooke & Maw, 311-347, and includes updates from the 2013 Novello edition, "Herbert Howells: A Collection of Songs for Voice and Piano."

²⁴ Christopher Palmer, *Herbert Howells: A Study* (Borough Green, UK: Novello, 1978), 6.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

²⁶ Hodgson, 8-9.

merely a question of influence but also of intuitive affinity. We both came from the same part of the world and loved it dearly; we were both attracted by Tudor music, plainsong, and the modes – my interest in folk music was perhaps more for its modal colouring than for its human associations. We felt we needed to write in these modes and in the pentatonic scale; there was no question of our using them simply because they were novel.²⁷

Howells's formative years in and around Gloucester Cathedral, the organ loft, and the experience of Ralph Vaughan Williams's *Tallis* premiere left a permanent mark on his musical language.

Howells's music is highly chromatic and grounded in tonal harmony. Observable harmonic characteristics include the use of modal inflection,²⁸ added note chords, extended sonorities (7, 9 11, 13),²⁹ repeated use of distinctive harmonies (Herbert Howells's scale and chord), split note chords, polymodal chromaticism,³⁰ showcasing and undermining of harmonic relationships,³¹ and liberal use of appoggiatura and suspensions. Palmer describes Howells's use of pedal point as integral to his style, lending an "illusion of safety."³² Normalization of dissonance occurs through frequent use. Syncopation and subdivision frequently disguise meter, which Howells regularly shifts to suit the need of a phrase.

Lionel Pike referred to Howells's frequent use of a particular augmented eleventh chord as akin to Scriabin's "Mystic chord."³³ Howells used this characteristic sonority as a scale and as a chord. Howells's scale is a major scale with a raised fourth and a lowered seventh, also known as "Lydian-Mixolydian."³⁴ I will refer to Howells's scale as "HH scale." See Example 1. Howells's chord is a

²⁷ Palmer, *Study*, 11-12.

²⁸ Hodgson, iv.

²⁹ Palmer, *Study*, 19-20.

³⁰ Jonathan Clinch, "'Tunes all the way?': Romantic Modernism and the Piano Concertos of Herbert Howells," in *The Music of Herbert Howells*, ed. Phillip A. Cooke and David Maw (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), 280.

³¹ Diane Nolan Cooke, "Window on a Complex Style: *Six Pieces for Organ*," in *The Music of Herbert Howells*, ed. Phillip A. Cooke and David Maw (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), 38-39.

³² Palmer, *Celebration*, 160-162.

³³ Lionel Pike, "Howells and Counterpoint," in *The Music of Herbert Howells*, ed. Phillip A. Cooke and David Maw (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), 27.

³⁴ Palmer, *Celebration*, 407-408. Lydian-Mixolydian was also Béla Bartók's "acoustic scale." Howells's use of modes and mode mixture was an organic outgrowth of his interest in Tudor music. Unlike Bartók, Howells was not a collector of folk songs. Instead, he considered the sound world of the Tudors an essential aspect of his being. In "English Keyboard Music," a BBC broadcast from March 19, 1962, Howells recalled meeting Bartók: "About forty years ago the great Hungarian composer, Bartók, invited me to tea and talk in London. He played exciting percussive pieces of his own. It was thrilling: a tornado of sound. He invited me to play to him – anything I wished. This is the sort of thing I chose: [plays *His Rest* by Giles Farnaby (1563-1640)]. I added a *Pavane* by William Byrd (c.1539-1623), and *The Carman's Whistle* and *Tower Hill*. Bartók listened, almost as subdued as the

major triad with a major or minor seventh and an augmented eleventh. I will refer to Howells's chord by identifying the root with superscript "HH." Quality of the seventh will be included in parenthesis. See Example 2.



Example 1. C^{HH} scale, III.1-3, oboe part.



Example 2. Howells's chord, D^{HH(m7+11)}, III.212, piano part.

However rich the harmony and texture, Howells placed supreme importance on melody and the integrity of the line. He said, "I've always admired Delius for his flow, his continuity – a quality which I feel to be of the utmost importance in composition, and one which is sadly lacking in much contemporary music."³⁵ Howells added that he conceives of his music "polyphonically, in lines." His use of melody and countermelody is characterized by overlapping within and elision between phrases, repetition, essential simplicity, and long phrase length.

slender pieces themselves. He was impressed. Of course, my modest account of the pieces for Virginals were being played on a modern grand piano – Elizabethan instruments were rare in London in the early twenties. Now we are luckier. They are in our midst again. Skilled craftsmen and musical scholars are reproducing the instruments for which the brilliant Tudors and their successors wrote their works. So that in our crushingly noisy world it is increasingly possible to hear the sound of a Clavichord. Everywhere, in these sound-drenched days of gigantic orchestral concerts, there is an astonishing revival of interest in the gentler instruments of the 16th and 17th centuries. ... And the clavichord – in all its restriction of compass, but all its felicity of sound and idiom – became (as it were) a part of my essential mind and mood."

³⁵ Palmer, *Study*, 15-16.

Many writers referred to the difficulty of clearly defining Howells's style owing to the density of texture and associated complexity of harmony. Structure in Howells's instrumental music is often a derivative of his cyclic treatment of melody. Additionally, structure may arise from extra-musical sources, such as poetry, of which Walter de la Mare's poetry was his favorite. Rhapsodic procedure is a worthy analog to describe Howells's style. A rhapsody is a single movement instrumental work improvisational in character.³⁶ On rhapsodic composition, Howells said,

It is perhaps the whole secret of "inspiration" that an idea should seize a composer's imagination and that simultaneously the imagination should seize upon the idea, the objective and subjective activities reacting upon each other until both have had full play; and in a rhapsodic composition there should be nothing extraneous to the one idea upon which the consciousness has brooded in rapture. ...the preparation of the background, the emergence of the tune which is the reason of the rhapsody, the elaboration of the brooding background, the fuller version of the tune, the gradual dying down and fading, and the ending of the spell.³⁷

Rhapsody also figured into Howells's improvisations at St. John's College. Palmer describes them as "free, rhapsodic, difficult-to-grasp formally in a conventional analytic way but enormously satisfying emotionally and in terms of a broad, spacious, long-spanned design."³⁸ In discussing Howells's approach to form more generally, Palmer says,

Structural discipline has always come naturally to Howells. Despite the free-ranging nature of his lyricism and the numerous works bearing the terms 'rhapsody' or 'fantasy', his formal sense has always been unimpeachable. ...all of his music has the form necessitated by its nature, and its own integrity. He has tended to remain faithful to the broad outlines of sonata (first-movement) form in that the three basic lines of demarcation are generally observed; but within the main areas of the manoeuvre thus plotted, the music is free to follow the dictates of its own inner logic. Howells has been especially drawn to the cyclic principle, that of unity in diversity...subtle interrelationship between movements.³⁹

Many of Howells's students and colleagues recall him not having a particular method of teaching. Gerald Hendrie said, "I don't remember HH ever planning any teaching or being in any way systematic:

³⁶ Donald James Grice, "Rhapsody in the Organ Works of Herbert Howells: An Examination of Rhapsody-Based Organ Works Both With and Without Text Associations and a Look at the Expressive Effects Implied by the Texts" (DMA diss., University of Arizona, 2008), 15, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

³⁷ John Nixon McMillan, "The Organ Works of Herbert Howells (1892-1983)" (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 1997), 47, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

³⁸ Palmer, *Celebration*, 173.

³⁹ Palmer, *Study*, 25.

he merely reacted to what was put in front of him.”⁴⁰ Bryan Kelly said, “Herbert Howells’ teaching was conducted with a great deal of superficial waffle (like a lot of his music, with its unnecessary lines of counterpoint)...”⁴¹ Joan Trimble, on the other hand, said, “I found him, as a teacher, to be a meticulous craftsman.”⁴² This ability to think on his feet, improvise, and draw on his deep musical knowledge shows in his compositions. Melodic ideas are recycled as if to bring multiple perspectives to the same subject, trademark harmonic devices personalize the rhetoric, and an abundance of detail is evidence of working and re-working. Howells’s compositions do not rely on traditional structures. Instead, they are products of refined improvisation, fleshed out and enhanced to fully realized, persuasive arguments.

⁴⁰ Palmer, *Celebration*, 227.

⁴¹ Ibid., 229.

⁴² Ibid., 232.

Chapter 2: ORIGINS AND ANALYSIS

Origins

The Sonata for Oboe and Piano, HH 239, was composed in 1942¹ and dedicated to eminent British oboist Léon Goossens (1897-1988). Little is known regarding the origin of the sonata. Howells, at the time, was serving as Deputy Organist at St. John's Cathedral, Cambridge. The existence of the sonata was unknown until Christopher Palmer borrowed and photocopied the manuscript while preparing his 1978 book, *Herbert Howells: A Study*. The copy was a fortunate occurrence, as the original was lost by the time Howells died. Oboist Sarah Francis and pianist Peter Dickinson gave the premiere performance on July 9, 1984 at the Cheltenham Festival, a year and four months posthumous.

In 1986, Goossens, then age 88, remembered he had “serious reservations about the structure of the piece” [in 1942]. After presenting the sonata to Goossens, Howells recalled it “to have another go at it.”² It is unclear if Howells did any further refinement or simply shelved the piece. Either way, the sonata sat unnoticed until Palmer's chance encounter years later. Francis and Dickinson edited the facsimile for publication by Novello in 1986. Interestingly, Palmer did not include the oboe sonata in his discussion of Howells's chamber music in *Herbert Howells: A Study*, but he did include it in his “list of principal works.”³

Paul Spicer and Fabian Huss suggest that Howells, spurned by Goossens's objection, used his Sonata for Clarinet and Piano, HH 241 (1946) to work out the aforementioned problem of structure. An overall simpler style and clearer structure, as well as the choice of instrument, suggest to Huss that Howells may have developed reservations as to the oboe's capabilities.⁴ Writing on Vaughan Williams's Oboe Concerto in 1947, Howells said:

¹ Howells, Herbert, *Sonata for Oboe and Piano*, HH 239, ed. Peter Dickinson and Sarah Francis (London: Novello, 1987), 34. “H.H. London 27 August 1942.”

² Ibid., preface.

³ Palmer, *Study*, 84-87.

⁴ Fabian Huss, “Style and Structure in the Oboe Sonata and Clarinet Sonata,” in *The Music of Herbert Howells*, ed. Phillip A. Cooke and David Maw (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), 154.

The oboe is an instrument born to be brief, and to that circumstance the style of any work written for it should be accommodating. Even if you bring Mr. Léon Goossens' limitless breathing powers and his unique tone-control to the playing of it, this instrument must still avoid the easy sin of outstaying its welcome. No other instrument can make one want more; none should more scrupulously leave one still unsated.⁵

Howells may have been motivated by Goossens's renowned playing to push the oboe to what he perceived as its technical limit.

The second, third, and fourth movements of the oboe sonata reference an earlier-composed song of 1920, "O Garlands, Hanging by the Doors," HH 121 for voice and piano.⁶ Originally composed for tenor Gervase Elwes (1866-1921), the song remained unpublished until Novello's edition of 2013.⁷ Howells dated the score December 5, 1920. Elwes was unexpectedly killed in a railroad accident the following month, and perhaps his death was the reason for the song's withdrawal. The preface to the published oboe sonata score does not mention the song by name, suggesting the connection between the two pieces had not yet been established in 1987. Howells left no clues as to why he recycled the song. Huss writes that features of texture and harmony [of the second movement] refer to the first movement, "suggesting that these similarities may have recalled the song to his mind when contemplating the Oboe Sonata's slow movement."⁸ This assumes Howells composed the opening movement first and that he had no other preemptory reason to reuse the song. The true reason for Howells's combining the works is yet to be discovered.

⁵ Huss, 154.

⁶ Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "garland, n.," accessed December 22, 2016, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/76797?rskey=xs9J5Y&result=1&isAdvanced=false>. A garland is "a wreath made of flowers, leaves, etc., worn on the head like a crown, or hung about an object for decoration."

⁷ Herbert Howells, *A Collection of Songs for Voice and Piano*, ed. Scott Crowne (London: Novello, 2013). Includes eight other previously unpublished art songs composed 1914-36.

⁸ Huss, 160-161.

Analysis

The analyses which follow provide of both works a general overview of structure, and a detailed, phrase-level account of melodic, harmonic, and expressive context. First, each sonata movement is outlined to show large scale delineation of structure. Howells did not use traditional forms in the oboe sonata. He did, however, leave clues throughout the score to identify formal divisions such as double bar lines, fermatas, expressive markings, and tempo markings. The song is short and organized by its text, so a form outline is not necessary.

Second, each outline is followed by a phrase-level descriptive analysis of the sonata and song, in the style of the British music theorist Donald Francis Tovey (1875-1940), whom Howells knew.⁹ Tovey's narrative approach is appropriate for the sonata as it does not lend itself to large scale harmonic and structural analysis. Complex harmonies, asymmetric phrasing, and the recycling of melody necessitate a method of analysis which elucidates sufficient detail in a musical and conversational manner. A few explanatory notes will assist in reading the analysis. Each phrase is named by its measure numbers. Superscript measure numbers refer to instances of phrases eliding, overlapping, or otherwise sharing a measure. Where necessary, subgrouping within a phrase is described by the number of measures involved. For example, a four bar phrase may have the subgrouping 2 + 2. If that same phrase shared material over a bar line, it may appear as 3 + 2. For simplicity, fractions of measures are ignored and will always appear as at least one measure.

Specific pitches referenced from the score are designated using scientific pitch notation. In scientific pitch notation, octaves are designated by number beginning with C0, four octaves below middle C. Other references to pitch are made by note name only. Melodic successions of pitches appear in brackets with note names separated by arrows [ex. E → D#]. Chords are identified by root and quality

⁹ Palmer, *Celebration*, 132. Howells knew Tovey and mentioned him in his notes to the lecture *On Being British and Musical* (1952). "...Donald Tovey, who could talk for two hours or more unbrokenly of a seemingly insignificant technical feature in a composer's work until the thing assumed the importance of a fundamental procedure in the art of composition."

with additional information following in superscript. Abbreviations for chord quality are the following: M = major, m = minor, ° = diminished, ° = half diminished, + = augmented, ! = split note. Successions of chords appear by name in brackets separated by arrows [ex. CM → D^bM¹¹]. More elaborate chord progressions appear as a diagram. To more easily facilitate comparisons amongst movements and the song, measures will be notated as a Roman numeral and measure number separated by a period, with “G” referring to the song. For example, I.115 refers to the first movement, measure 115. Where measure location is identifiable from context, “measure” is shortened to “m” preceding the measure number [ex. m56-74]. Themes A, B, and C, written as T/A, T/B, and T/C, will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3. It is recommended that this analysis be used in close consultation with the score.

Sonata for Oboe and Piano, HH 239 (1942)

Movement I. Outline

Part 1	1-59	<i>Placido, teneramente, ma con moto</i> (♩ = 72)
	1-37	
	38-59	<i>Più animato, poco a poco</i> (♩ = 96)
Part 2	60-102	
	60-79	<i>slentando</i>
	79-102	<i>poco agitato</i>
Part 3	102-144	<i>Sonore e ritmico</i> (♩ = 104)
	102-131	
	31-144	
Part 4	144-161	
	144-150	<i>poco a poco ritardando</i>
	150-161	(♩ = 84)

Movement I. Analysis

Part 1 – *Placido, teneramente, ma con moto* (♩ = 72)

1-8. – Entrance of piano left hand obscures $\frac{3}{4}$ meter at outset; upward septuplet begins on second eighth note of first beat. Equivocal harmony of opening measure gives way to first statement of T/A in A Minor at m2. Pedal A1 grounds oblique harmonic motion. 1 + 7.

8-10. – Oboe entrance echoes T/A material, *piano*, in G# Minor; piano left hand echoes and abbreviates opening measures.

¹⁰/11-14. – Continuation, oboe twice rises to F#5 and falls to B4; first strong cross relation at m14 is also the beginning of a long crescendo. 2 + 2.

¹⁴/15-16. – Oboe continues 2 bar rising sequence to F#5 but this time lingers, bolstered by strong DM⁷.

¹⁶/17-19. – The oboe drops down an octave and begins 3 bar step-wise ascent [C#5 → D5 → E5 → F5]; brief lingering on FM⁷ at m19.

20-23. – Significant arrival, *forte sonore*, at m20 as oboe reaches to C6 for a quarter note, resolving downward Bb5, and punctuated by T/A in piano right hand.

²³/24-27. – By way of an ascending major third, oboe hovers four beats on F#5 before descending step-wise, with embellishment.

²⁷/28-29. – Dialogue continues, oboe stubbornly off-beat, CM⁷ to passing FM beat 3 of m27; non sequitur arrival to third inversion A#m⁷ at m28.

²⁹/30-33. – Rare unison moment between oboe and piano right hand highlights closing phrase; gradual reduction of texture leading to

³³/34-37. – *Ritardando al meno mosso* as EbM⁴₃ transitions to 4 bar codetta in Bb Minor; *più rallentando* corresponds to rhythmic augmentation of oboe's descent beginning in m35 [Eb5 → Db5 → C5 → Bb4] to bar line *fermata*.

Part 2 - *più animato, poco a poco* (♩ = 96)

38-43. – Bb is immediately exchanged for A# as oboe introduces T/B over piano's undulating offbeats. Left hand framework of minor third [A#3 → C#4], though Howells begins to step outside that boundary in m39. Though oboe melody continues moving upward and increasingly in conflict with the piano at m41, piano harmony of initial three bars is largely repeated, and the two voices reconvene at m43. 3 + 2.

⁴³/44-47. – Continuation of rising melodic trajectory and increasingly frenetic rhythmic pace. Since m42, use of G♭, A♭, and B♭ directly conflicts piano harmony, foreshadows a move away from A# pitch center. Steady offbeats in piano's rhythm. Augmented sonorities heighten tension, and left hand stretches between G#3 and E4. 2 + 3.

⁴⁷/48-50. – Clear, ascending C#m triad crescendos to *forte* Dm⁹ and the oboe's highest pitch level thus far, E6. BbM⁶₄ (enh. A#) leads to next pitch center.

⁵⁰/51-54. – Pedal A1 establishes pitch center as oboe and piano maneuver through shifting meter. Apex of *più animato, poco a poco* pacing prior to closing *ritardando*. From this phrase forward, Howells freely adapts meter to fit phrase content.

55-59. – Prominent, ascending A Locrian scale in piano left hand over A2 pedal and sustained C5 from oboe. Locrian sonority persists through *ritardando* but gives way to Am⁶ in m59. Fermata on bar line gives space before continuing.

60-65. – *Slentando piano* unison octaves on T/B (Bb and Eb are briefly retained from A Locrian). Left hand breaks with right at m61 to anchor phrase with repeated D4 and ascending D Major scale. 2 + 2 + 1.

66-69. – Oboe sustains A5 *pianissimo* and leaps to D5 over piano's Bb⁽⁵¹⁾. Transition via *ritardando* stretching over T/B in oboe.

⁶⁹/70-73. – *A tempo*; 2 + 2 + 1. Offbeats now prominent in oboe as piano girds rhythmic regularity with sixteenths (over irregular groups of five eighth notes). Harmony from m70-73 remains within DM¹³, but forward momentum and the oboe's soaring melody prevents stagnation.

⁷³/74-79. – Harmony changes to CM¹³ on the first beat of m74 and stays through m78. Oboe leaps upward to C6 for four and a half beats before beginning step-wise descent to end of phrase. Oboe melodic tritone [D5 → A♭4] m77-78 punctuates significant and unusually clear cadential figure [CM → B♭M].

⁷⁹/80-84. – Rising figure in piano right hand (*piano sonore, non forte*) over burbling sixteenths support oboe (*mezzo forte poco agitato*). *Agitato* character aided by substantial increase in rate of harmonic rhythm (by beat). Transition to new pitch center in m83 [C♭m⁷ (enh. B♭) → Em⁷]. 2 + 2.

⁸⁴/85-89. – Oboe, after a T/B flourish around E5, continues to press upward, 2 + 2 + 2. As piano sixteenth figurations *crescendo*, the oboe remains relatively calm, using mostly long rhythmic values interspersed with thirty-seconds as the oboe reaches for

90-96. – F6 and sustains for an entire measure plus an eighth. This significant *forte* arrival at m90 in B♭ Lydian is the first appearance of Howells's chord, B♭^{HH(M7+11)}. Measures 91 and 95 are also first use of piano silence to enhance oboe's descending sixteenth-note triplet lines. 2 + 3 + 2.

⁹⁶/97-102. – From C4, oboe ascends on B♭ Lydian, several times displacing an octave. Following three crashing B♭^{HH(M7+11)} chords, the oboe sweeps upward via sextuplets up and over F6 to E6. 3 + 2.

Part 3 – *sonore e ritmico* (♩ = 104)

102-107/¹⁰⁸. – As oboe burns *fortissimo* E6, piano left hand plods *pesante (poco staccato)* quarter notes. B♭ Lydian harmonic area maintained. Piano right hand reintroduces T/A at m106. 2 + 2 + 2.

108-115/¹¹⁶. – Piano right hand reiterates T/A three additional times while oboe reenters on B♭5 for four measures, descends, and settles on G4. Addition of D♭ in oboe at m110 shifts mode to B♭ Dorian. Piano left hand is suddenly legato at m112. 2 + 2 + 2 + 2.

116-120/¹²¹. – Reuse of material from m102-107 a whole tone higher in C Lydian. *Pesante* piano left hand returns, right hand *forte* with biting grace note, angry to have been interrupted, but quickly drops to *piano* a measure later and left hand is legato by m118. 1 + 2 + 2.

121-126/¹²⁷. – Oboe reenters accented, *sforzando piano subito*, lingers around C5, and proceeds down to C4. Addition of B♭ by oboe at m122 establishes C^{HH} scale. 2 + 3 + 1.

127-130. – Using T/A, oboe abruptly turns to A Locrian (with #6 and #7), crescendos through four bars, ascending, to an abrupt rest on the next downbeat. 2 + 2.

131-133/¹³⁴. – First of three iterations in which the oboe, as tintinnabulation, rings out accented offbeats over piano's clamoring tremolo/trill figurations; 2 + 1. Harmonic rhythm slows; A♭m¹³ sustains two measures as the oboe descends; oboe regroups around F4 over E♭m⁹, and swiftly returns upwards to

¹³⁴/135-137. – The second of three tintinnabulations over [D♭M¹³ → E♭m¹¹]. 2 + 2.

138-140. – Chromatic step upward [$D\flat \rightarrow D\sharp$] on last eighth note of m137 in piano right hand is a brief transition to the third tintinnabulation over [$G^{HH(M7+11)} \rightarrow BM$].

¹⁴⁰/141-143. – Oboe weaves downward over $G^{HH(m7+11)}$ [$A\sharp$ in tension against $A\flat$] merges with $D\flat M^9$ [alleviates tension] and settles on $A\flat 4$ without slowing; 3 bar phrase.

Part 4 – *poco a poco ritardando* [to m150]

¹⁴³/144-146/¹⁴⁷. – As tempo slows, oboe gently ascends to F4 on $A\flat$ Dorian while piano right hand gives last statement of T/A. Piano right hand foreshadows second movement *espressivo* melody m146-149; 4 bar group contradicts oboe phrasing. 2 + 1.

147-149/¹⁵⁰. – Significant three bar cadential moment under *diminuendo* and *ritardando*. Oboe is in contrary motion to piano right hand, but both voices are moving obliquely to recurring $E\flat$ in piano left hand. $A\flat$ Dorian retained melodically; chords, harmony leans toward closing, with generous internal dissonance [$A\flat m^9 \rightarrow G\flat m^{13} \rightarrow D\flat m^9 \rightarrow E\flat M$].

150-154/¹⁵⁵. – ($\text{♩} = 84$) Brief respite from discord as oboe and piano resolve to pure $E\flat M$ in root position on the second quarter note of m150. Oboe will sustain $B\flat 5$ for two and a half measures. Piano throughout this 3 + 3 phrase is the dominant voice. From *smorzando* at m152, piano has one last harmonic throe [$D\flat m^9 \rightarrow A\flat m \rightarrow G\flat m \rightarrow E\flat M$].

155-161. – Piano monody in octaves, *mezzo piano sonore*, walks through mode mixture, [$E\flat$ Major \rightarrow Minor \rightarrow Locrian \rightarrow Major]. Fermata on final $E\flat$ and caesura over double bar line before continuing. 2 + 4.

Movement II. Outline

Part 1 1-26 *Lento; assai espressivo e tranquillo* (♩ = 52)

1-4
4-9
9-14
14-21
21-26

Part 2 26-36 *a tempo*

26-27
27-30
30-34
34-37

Part 3 36-49 *a tempo*

36-37
37-40
40-44
45-48

Part 4 49-63 *a tempo*

49-54
54-58
58-60
60-63

Part 5 63-78 *Assai tranquillo*

63-65
65-69
70-74
75-78

Movement II. Analysis

Part 1 – *Lento; assai espressivo e tranquillo* (♩ = 52)

1-4. – Piano introduction, 2 + 2. Gentle wash of parallel *pianissimo* minor seventh chords in B Major allow brief and simple melodic gestures to peek out, first from the tenor voice in m1, followed by the top voice in m3. Left hand ascends as right descends. Crescendo in m4 as oboe enters.

⁴/5-8/⁹. – Piano's continuous quarter note motion is altered to more spacious rhythm; oboe sings first statement of T/C in middle register. For oboe, all four bars are under one slur, but phrasing follows 2 + 2 with descending line [E5 → D#5 → C#5 → B4].

9-13/¹⁴. – Piano again floods texture with consecutive extended sonorities (beginning m8, overlaps oboe phrase), and oboe from mid-measure restates material from m5. Oboe crescendos through second half of phrase, resolving upward to C# Major. As oboe concludes 2 + 2 phrase, piano restarts quarter note extended sonorities, transposed up a whole step with a more rhythmically active inner voice.

14-20/²¹. – Oboe, *poco più forte*, takes melody into higher tessitura with new material; oboe phrase beginning overlaps piano's by one measure. Oboe's excursion to high range does not last, nor does foray to major. Following oboe's dramatic downward octave leap at m16, harmony returns to minor. 2 + 2 phrase is extended 2 bars, oboe alone. E# in m20 is first non-diatonic pitch for oboe thus far.

21-25. – Piano alone recalls first movement with T/A, *mesto*. [F#M → CM] transition via tritone at m26 may be a subtle reference to HH scale/chord.

Part 2 – *a tempo*

26-27. – Brief piano introduction at new section and new pitch center, C#4. Though tempo does not change, consistent sixteenth notes give forward momentum and a sense of urgency. Harmonic rhythm [quarter → half] balances the sixteenths.

²⁷/28-29. – Piano repeats previous bars as oboe starts 2 bar melody, *mezzo forte*, in high tessitura around Ab5 [Ab Lydian].

30-32. – Through gentle *crescendo*, oboe stretches melody up to Db6 and slowly descends through Ab Phrygian. Harmonic rhythm from piano throughout this 3 bar phrase slows to one chord per bar yet retains consistent sixteenth notes [Dbm¹¹ → Dbm⁹ → C#m¹¹].

³²/33-34. – Significant cadence on A^{HH(m7+11)} lead by oboe eighth notes; oboe step-wise descent [G → F# → E] in m33 is complemented by piano outer voices ascending. Motion briefly ceases by beat 3 of m33, and AM⁶₄ rings over the bar line.

34-35. – Transition, *poco ritardando*. Oboe recalls first movement with T/A statement, less than half the length of piano's transition to Part 2. Tritone relationship in harmonic motion [Am⁹ → D#⁹].

36-44. – Repeat of m26-34 material transposed higher by an augmented second, 2 + 3 + 3 + 3. Oboe tessitura is entirely within the staff. Following cadence on C^{HH(m7+11)} in m43, transition to next phrase is simply an E^{o6} on the final quarter note of m44 in *diminuendo* and reduced texture, without *ritardando*.

45-48. – Four bar phrase, 2 + 2, in which oboe arcs upward *teneramente* [F#4 → G#5] outlining C# Minor. Harmonic rhythm slows, one chord per two bars, coinciding with *poco ritardando* transition.

Part 3 – *a tempo*

49-54. – Though a continuation of the previous phrase, oboe restarts T/C material beginning at m49. Oboe's melodic motion [B4 → E5] m48-49 is bland compared to prior transitions via tritone. Pedal B0 in piano is allowed to ring at irregular intervals throughout Part 3. Measures 52-55 outline ascending EM in oboe; piano assists with upward motion in both hands in m53 to the quasi-cadence on EM⁶ at the downbeat of m54. 2 + 4.

⁵⁴/55-58. – Oboe swiftly moves past B5 to hover on A#5, F#5, and E5 before settling on B4. Conspicuous use of offbeat rhythm in both instruments obscures shifting meter. Howells anchors harmony with EM⁷ with differing inversions at m54, 56, and 58, pedal B0 sprinkled within. 3 + 1.

58-62. – Initial B Dorian ascent begins with slow rise of piano right hand octaves, and oboe joins pattern on second eighth note of beat four, m58. Oboe's climb is interrupted by downward leap [F#5 → D4] *estinto* to m63, breaking the phrase into two groups of two bars. Piano's final B0 pedal tone rings out as piano right hand and oboe, in canon offset by a quarter note, recommit to B Dorian. It should be noted, however, that the piano offers EM in first inversion and EM⁷ at m59 and 60, respectively. Though the final two bars are essentially monadic, a plagal cadence can be heard [EM⁷ → BM⁷].¹

Part 4 – *Assai tranquillo*

63-65. – Codetta signaled by return of original key and meter signatures. Oboe suspends half note [C#6 → B5] over piano's sixteenths. The brightness of B Major is fleeting; as oboe leaves its pianissimo B5, the piano diverts to C#⁷ in second inversion by beat two of m65.

⁶⁵/66-69. – Oboe's solo anacrusis to m67 leads to oboe's middle register iteration of C#5 to B4, *pianissimo*. Piano repeats sixteenth figuration at m67; Howells instructs *più e più tranquillo*. Nostalgia is broken at beat three of m68 with sustained A#⁴₂. 1 + 3.

70-72/⁷³⁻⁷⁴. – Third and concluding [C#4 → B3], *mezzo piano*. Oboe's nearly three measure sustain of B3 overlaps and reinforces pedal B0, m73. 3 (+ 2).

72-78. – Seven bar conclusion; at outset seems to be a simple confirmation of B Major, but piano right hand begins four bar ascent on HH scale. 4 + 3. The final bars are a bright and shimmering B^{HH(m7+11)}; the piano right hand is in the sixth and seventh octaves. This conclusion – in texture and mood – is opposite of the previous movement.

¹ Part 3 will be repeated, in transposition, toward the end of the fourth movement.

Movement III. Outline

*Part 1	1-118	<i>Allegro mosso, scherzando</i> (♩ = 126)
	1-58	
	58-78	
	78-118	
Part 2	119-160	<i>(tempo giusto)</i>
	119-138	
	138-160	
*Part 3	160-215	<i>Briosio (come prima)</i>
	160-182	
	182-193	<i>Con moto (ma placido)</i>
	193-215	<i>Poco più Vivo</i>
Part 4	215-247	<i>Ritmico, sonore ed espressivo</i>
	215-233	
	233-247	
Part 5	248-269	<i>Meno mosso, rubato</i> (♩ = 66) [oboe cadenza]
	248-253	
	253-263	<i>Lento, espressivo</i> (♩ = 54)
	263-269	<i>(un poco più movimento)</i>

Movement III. Analysis

Part 1 - *Allegro mosso, scherzando* (♩ = 126)

²/1-2/³. – *Forte* outburst from piano [Bb⁺ → CM] sets oboe off, *forte* and *staccato*, on ascending C^{HH} scale.

3-8. – Oboe melody in *pianissimo* expands outwardly around E5 between curt swipes of piano. No loyalty to a particular meter; Howells shifts meter *ad lib* to suit needs of the phrase. 2 + 4.

9-15. – Oboe melody repeats material from m5-7 but steps up to G5 and *forte* by m13. Piano, beginning at m11, uses arpeggiated figure to land on CM⁶ at the downbeat of m13. Oboe, as if surprised by the move to G5, quickly retreats down to E4. Piano joins oboe in highlighting C^{HH} scale's pitches of interest, F# and Bb. 2 + 2 + 4.

16-20/²¹. – Oboe vaults to E6, hangs out for entirety of m17, and displaces melody down to F#5 before proceeding. Piano right hand countermelody, similar to oboe in contour, is offset by one measure. 2 + 3.

21-22/²³. – Abrupt adjustment of pitch center down half step to B \flat at the downbeat of m21. Oboe echoes opening measures, slurred and *mezzo piano*, but using a different scale (ascending B Melodic Minor with a lowered fifth).

23-27. – Similar material, transposed down half step, in oboe and piano, echoes m3-8. Though piano maintains outburst character; oboe melody is more slurred, less staccato, but outward expansion is retained (this time around D5). Measure 27 ends slur with staccato, downward to D5. 2 + 2 + 3.

28-31/³². – Oboe's jocularly ends up on G \sharp 5, downbeat of m30, reinforced by rhythmic alignment with piano's G \sharp ^{o7}. Staccato ending of slur in m30 is upward to G \sharp 5. Tritone permeates m31; oboe crescendos through and lands, *forte*, on G \flat 5. 2 + 2.

32-35/³⁶. – Piano interlude, 2 + 2, in clear E \flat Dorian.

36-44. – Oboe takes the next eight bars to gradually ascend via A Locrian to C6 and C Major, m44. Another melodic tritone assists in closing the phrase. 2 + 2 + 2 + 2.

44-48/⁴⁹. – Piano interlude following *sforzando* CM, downbeat of m44. Howells wastes no time restating C^{HH}, *fortissimo*, piano right hand. Static harmony from m47-48 continues to next phrase. 3 + 2.

49-51. – Piano, *pianissimo subito*, sits on EM¹³ in fifth inversion; oboe contradicts harmony with apparent E Minor melody, but agrees with slurred texture. 1 + 2.

⁵¹/52-58. – Via long crescendo, oboe begins an ascent from E4, mostly using staccato figurations established at movement beginning. Segue to next phrase is quick as oboe quickly dives through the end of m57. 4 + 2.

58-66. – Oboe arrives, *sforzando piano*, on G \flat 5, beginning a new series of long, legato phrases in E \flat m. [Howells once again sets up a melodic tritone in m57, but unlike previous phrase transitions, does not follow through on the subsequent downbeat.] Accompaniment remains choppy, segmented. A continuing characteristic of these legato phrases is Howells's adherence to one meter signature ($\frac{2}{4}$) and frequent obscuration of beat by syncopation. 3 + 3 + 2.

66-72. – *Sforzando piano subito*, continuation legato character from oboe, now in B \flat Minor. Piano sneaks in a fresh restatement of T/A on second eighth note of m66. Accompaniment texture now features constant, rising, arpeggiated, eighth notes in piano left hand. 3 + 4.

73-77. – Melodic direction in oboe changes by m74, downward toward next phrase. Piano right hand, *mezzo forte più sostenuto*, restates T/A while left hand drops to B \flat 2 and rises. 1 + 4.

78-81/⁸². – Enharmonic pickups lead off *più ritmico* in C \sharp Minor. 2 + 2.

82-87. – Oboe is working toward D6 and B Locrian. G^{HH(M7+11)} in m86. 2 + 2 + 3.

88-94. – Dotted eighth sixteenth characterize oboe's descent to B3 followed by sweep upward on B Locrian. 3 + 4.

95-100. – Material repeated from previous phrase. Descent to C5, upward on C Phrygian from Db4. Dotted rhythms bookend phrase. 2 + 2 + 2.

101-105. – Closing section of Part 1, excited by oboe trills and ascent from C4 to C6 using C^{HH} scale/Phrygian. Piano adds to flurrying texture with rapid arpeggios, *smorzando*, and generally high tessitura. 2 + 3.

¹⁰⁵/106-113. – Piano left hand retains C5 as a pedal tone with nearly constant eighth notes. Right hand countermelody briefly recalls end of first movement. Oboe and piano share several unison dotted quarters, blurred by trills, in m108 and m109 on the way to a unison resolution at m114. 2 + 6.

114-118/¹¹⁹. – Piano solo closes Part 1 by highlighting [Db → C] in five sequentially lower octaves and stretching rhythm, *senza ritardando*. Howells officially transitions to Part 2 via tritone [C2 → F#1].

Part 2 – (*tempo giusto*)

119-124. – Beginning of Part 2 is signaled by an abrupt change of meter to $\frac{7}{8}$ and piano establishing an ostinato rhythm (first, fourth, and sixth eighth notes of the bar), *pianississimo* and *secco*. Starting with a single pitch, F#1, Howells increases chord density until oboe entrance at m125. 2 + 2 + 2.

125-128. – Oboe reemerges, familiar and arching – *pianissimo*, *dolce*, *placido* – with T/B melody closely resembling first movement's m60-64 in B Phrygian.

¹²⁸/129-133. – Oboe steps up to F#5, and with piano's countermelody beginning m127, *tenuto* F#4, works toward a unison moment at m133. 2 + 3.

134-137. – Meter briefly shifts to $\frac{2}{4}$ as oboe swells on D5 and retreats to B4. Piano left hand trades ostinato for T/A. One bar transition to the next phrase. 3 + 1.

138-145 – Not quite a literal repeat of m125-132, transposed down a half step. Piano and oboe share unison fragment in m145 [F#4 → A#4 → B4], offset by a sixteenth after beat one. 4 + 2 + 2.

¹⁴⁵/146-149. – Piano ostinato is becoming more embellished, though left hand remains *secco*. First beat of m146 is *forte* and *marcato* for the oboe; emphasis realigns rhythm with downbeat. 2 + 1.

¹⁴⁹/150-152. – Oboe again arches upward. Accompaniment's rhythmic intensity increases.

¹⁵²/153-155/¹⁵⁶. – Brief allusion to B Phrygian before oboe settles into E Phrygian. E \natural and F \sharp prominent in oboe and piano right hand. Texture of ostinato thins as oboe presses ahead. 2 + 1.

156-159/¹⁶⁰. – Oboe uses final phrase to ascend two octaves over piano's steadfast ostinato. Transition via tritone occurs m159; oboe [A# → E6] and piano [Bb1 → E1] contrary motion; *sforzando* EM at beat one of m160. 2 + 1 + 1.

Part 3 – *Briosio (come prima)*

160-168. – Brief piano interlude, *forte brillante*, reuses material from beginning of movement and HH chords to transition from [EM → E^{HH} → A^{HH} → C^{HH}]. 3 + 3 + 2.

168-169/¹⁷⁰. – Oboe entrance repeats III.2-3 on C^{HH}. Subtle differences from beginning include rhythm (straight sixteenths, no lingering on Bb) and articulation (lacking *staccato*). Piano's outbursts considerably more contained (in *pianissimo*) and lyrical, foreshadowing next section.

170-175. – Similar melodic contour found in III.3-6, however Howells diverts quickly to A pitch center. 2 + 4.

176-181. – An additional staccato comment from oboe precedes four legato bars which transition [AM → Am]. Melodic tritone from the piano at the final beat of m181 [F# → C].

182-192. – *Con moto (ma placido)*. Oboe and piano in canon for nine measures using T/B, offset by a quarter note and major third. Continuous eighth notes in piano left hand retain pedal E3 as well as outline Am. Harmony remains diatonic until suggestion of A Phrygian at m191. Piano use of the tritone as a cadential figure [E → Bb] is hidden within back-to-back perfect fifths to the downbeat of m193. 4 + 4 + 3.

193-200. – *poco più Vivo, poco a poco crescendo e accelerando sempre* [to m199]. Resolution at downbeat of m193 is brief but appropriate to the escalating, frantic mood, mode mixture, and increasingly ambiguous pitch center. Piano left hand continues pumping out eighth notes and emphasizing E. Oboe leads with T/B in D Lydian as piano right hand states T/A. Melodic mode shifts to B Dorian at m197 and piano right hand responds with T/B. 4 + 4.

²⁰⁰/201-206. – Open conflict between C♯ and C# (B Dorian-Phrygian). Piano right hand is now increasing rhythmic intensity. Until m204, oboe has remained calmer, with longer and more lyrical lines. This changes in m205 as oboe gives in to momentum. 4 + 2.

²⁰⁶/207-209/²¹⁰. – Oboe in full blown glossolalia; tremendous flurry of rapid arpeggios and trills. Piano aggressively punctuates offbeats while left hand contributes to the noisiness with F#4 to G#4 trill.

210-214. – Closing bars of Part 3 emerge from the preceding cacophony as mostly oboe solo, three bars of D^{HH} scale followed by two of B Locrian. Piano blasts three unevenly spaced chords amongst oboe's scalar figures. Oboe is stuck between [B → F] in m213-214, but is able to break free with a dramatic escape to B5. 2 + 1 + 2.

Part 4 – *Ritmico, sonore ed espressivo*

215-218. – Full-throated *fortissimo*, accented B5 in oboe sets off piano, in $\frac{7}{8}$, with the same ostinato rhythm found in Part 2. Unlike earlier, piano is immediately *fortissimo, con Ped. non secco*. C pitch center.

²¹⁸/219-222/²²³. – Oboe cries out from C6 using T/C explicitly. Piano right hand waits two bars, begins counter melody first heard in Part 2, m128. 2 + 2.

223-227. – Oboe diverges from direct restatement of T/C, steps up to D5, undulates downward to unison fragment with piano right hand [quarter, two sixteenths followed by dotted quarter, G → F# → E → D]. Piano ostinato is briefly interrupted by single measure of $\frac{3}{4}$, m226; flourish on Am⁷ precedes GM⁹ on downbeat of [unison fragment] m227. 2 + 3.

²²⁷/228-233. – Continuation of oboe's long melodic line. Phrase begins with oboe, *mezzo forte*, plainly stating an upward perfect fifth [G → D] as piano left hand adds T/A. Piano right hand begins one quarter note before m228 on the same G4 as oboe, works upward with largely stepwise motion to second proclamation of unison fragment. Oboe eventually meets with piano at aforementioned fragment but is nearly a half measure late. Oboe and piano arrive in octaves on A via contrary motion; crescendo assists forward momentum of harmonic motion [Am¹¹ → Em¹¹ → CM⁹]. 2 + 2 + 2.

²³³/234-239. – Howells now begins sprinkling in C^{HH(m7+11)} to wrenching effect around oboe's B5. Unison fragment completely decoupled m238-239; only played by oboe. 2 + 2 + 2.

²³⁹/240-247. – Long wind-down ends Part 4; *diminuendo* from *forte*, rhythmic augmentation in oboe, and finally *rallentando*. Piano's ostinato continues throughout. Interesting harmonic transition [concurrent with ostinato] in the final two bars: bass stepwise ascent [C → D → E → F# → G] moves obliquely to oboe's sustained B4. Chord changes occur with bass [CM⁷ → DM⁷ → CM⁷ → F#⁽³¹⁾ → Am⁷]. Finalizing tritone appears in oboe's last bar of motion, m245, down and up around F4 [F → B]. Melodic tritone relationships of last quarter note prior and first beat of m248 [F# → C; A# → E; C# → G] is deprioritized by dissonance of split third and relative gentleness of the minor-minor seventh "resolution." 3 + 2 + 3.

Part 5 – Oboe cadenza.

248-249 – *meno mosso, rubato* (♩ = 66). Oboe emerges from gentle dissonance of Am⁷; use of A pentatonic seems repentant, as if apologizing for previous turbulence.

250 – Piano objects, *forte*, with F#^{o7} that is allowed to ring through m253. F#1 grace note preceding chord mocks oboe's attempt to remain neutral. Oboe pentatonicism persists, arpeggiating around three *tenuto* A5's before rising to B5.

251 – *Lento*. Oboe concedes to F# but only in passing through descending C Major. First example of an un-metered measure, stretched to accommodate cadenza.

252 – *Accelerando molto* and *crescendo* through waves of A Dorian.

253 – (*più lento*). Three short, decreasingly urgent statements, second two end on *fermata*. Piano chord is barely audible by this point. Final three beats *lento assai, piano diminuendo* to

254-256 – *lento, espressivo* (♩ = 54). Upper neighbor tone D6 made poignant by Howells's purposeful omission thus far. C^{HH(M7+11)} rings gently over three bars to

257 - *fermata* Bb^{HH(m7+11)} in fifth inversion and *pianissimo*. Oboe states subtle variation on T/A; rhythm accumulates to double-dotted quarter A5 followed by lingering glance to Bb4.

258 – Piano ascends *assai lento* on $G\sharp m^{M7M9}$ arpeggio. Oboe's $B\flat$ is respelled to $A\sharp$ and nervously acknowledges the troubling development. [Chord might be better explained enharmonically; root movement m257-259, $B\flat \rightarrow A\flat \rightarrow D\flat$. As written, the chords convey a sense of urgency, fragility, brightness.]

259-260 – Piano alone, *pianissimo*, using same material from m254-255, transposed up half step.

261-262 – From $D\flat^{HH(M7+11)}$, T/A emerges from the piano *mezzo forte* and shifts harmony to $A^{HH(M7+11)}$. [Interestingly, melodic tritone movement between chords is prominent ($B\flat \rightarrow E\flat$), but the descending (enharmonic) major third over the bar line manifests light in the midst of shade.]

263-265 – (*un poco più movimento*) Oboe perks up, swells T/B beginning on E5. Following a quarter rest, oboe reaches up to the highest pitch of the cadenza [E6]; the pitch ceiling gives way to tearful drop [$D\sharp 6 \rightarrow G\sharp 5 \rightarrow F\sharp 5$] followed by *forte* crescendo on A5 through the rest of m265. Piano reinvigorates $A^{HH(M7+11)}$ with a *forte* retort on the second beat of m265.

266 – The oboe makes a protracted E Major over $A^{HH(M7+11)}$, *accelerando e crescendo*.

267-268 – Oboe arrival on $F\sharp 4$ is greeted by piano on the second beat with EM^{11} in third inversion resolving to $GM^{(M7)}$ and *fermata* on subsequent downbeat.

268-1. – Using T/A, oboe has one final ascent to the explosive harmony of m269: $C\sharp m/B\flat M$ with added $F\sharp$ [providing melodic tritone to next measure]. Simultaneous downward, half step resolutions: oboe [$C\sharp \rightarrow C\flat$] and piano [$B\flat M \rightarrow Am$]. Segue *attacca*.

Movement 4: Outline

Part 1	1-21	<i>Tranquillo, mesto, ma con moto</i> (♩ = 66)
	1-10 10-21	
Part 2	21-35	<i>a tempo</i>
	21-30 30-35	
Part 3	35-48	<i>Più lento</i>
	35-39 40-48	

Movement 4: Analysis

Epilogue²

Part 1 – *Tranquillo, mesto, ma con moto* (♩ = 66)

2-9. – Final chord of third movement rings unimpeded, *diminuendo*, until fourth beat of m1, where piano reprises the opening measures of the first movement. Melodic material of piano right hand (T/A) is nearly note-for-note repetition, but left hand takes on considerably more active role around pedal A1. First movement meter retained ($\frac{3}{4}$). Oboe entrance is delayed one additional measure compared to the first movement. 1 + 7.

9-16. – Oboe enters at m10 using T/A, *piano*, pitch center displaced downward by half step. BM^{M7} sonority at m11 enhances *mesto* character with a whiff of brightness preceding oboe/piano unison moment at m11. Those unison pitches [G# → F# → B] divert pitch center to B. Unlike piano's reminiscence, oboe diverges quickly from T/A with new yet familiar material in a long arc. Piano left hand provides gentle reminders of pedal B1. 2 + 5.

Harmony of m13-16 is an interesting example of simple root movement within a highly saturated framework:

13	14	15	16
Bm ⁹	EM ⁷ – DM ⁷ – EM ⁷	C#m ⁷ – D ⁽³¹⁾ – EM ⁷	C#m ⁷ – B ^{o7}

^{16/17-20.} – Oboe takes four bars on an ascending line [C#5 → D5 → E5 → F5] transitioning to the next section, *non troppo crescendo* and *poco ritardando*. Melodic tritone is subtly present in oboe's embellishment at m17-18 and 20-21 [D → G#].

² The fourth is the only movement given a title.

Part 2 – *a tempo*

21-34. – Direct repeat of material from II.49-62, transposed down by whole step. Oboe is instructed to play *con anima*. Meter shifts to accommodate melody ($\frac{2}{4}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{5}{4}$). Slightly faster tempo (66 vs. 52 BPM) aids reminiscence: Howells is not suggesting a hazy memory, blurred by the passage of time, rather, he straightforwardly makes this material worth remembering.³ From m32, *estino al fine* corresponds with oboe and piano's canonic ascent on A Dorian. 2 + 4 + 3 + 1 + 4.

Part 3 – *Più lento*

35-39. – An immediate similarity to the second movement, m63-78, is noticeable. The oboe's approach to the first beat of m35 is unchanged, but the downward resolution is sustained an additional one and a half beats. The piano right hand is initially unvaried, a delicate recollection in *pianississimo*. Meter remains $\frac{3}{4}$ *al fine*. Compared directly with II.63-67, the most apparent differences are: harmonic rhythm slows to one measure increments; melodic line previously heard in oboe moves to piano right hand, m36; overall downward trajectory and harmonic finality over m35-38 is interrupted by uncertainty of m39. 4 + 1.

40-48. – Final statement from oboe echoes second movement in contour, however this time weaves upward, *ritardando*, using A Melodic Minor, leans on B \sharp at beat one of m41, and resolves upward to C \sharp on second beat. Piano enters at the moment of resolution and continues upward trajectory using A^{HH(m7+11)}. Oboe fades out by the downbeat of m45 leaving the piano to its final melodic statement. The major third in the left hand at the last beat of m46 rings past the D \sharp octaves in the right hand to *fermata*. 1 + 4 + 4.

³ Measures 21-24 correspond to final *Garlands* text, "...those tears that I did weep."

“O Garlands, Hanging by the Doors,” HH 121 (1920)

Slowly and sustained

1-2. – Two measure piano introduction establishes key (C Major), harmonic rhythm (alternation by beat in $\frac{3}{4}$), character and texture of accompaniment (widely spaced chord in left hand, gently rippling sixteenths in right; opposing melodic motion between hands), and prominent usage of seventh and ninth sonorities.

m1				2		
CM	Dm	CM ⁶		Dm ⁶ ₅	Em ⁶ ₅	FM

²/3-6. – Voice enters third beat of second measure, *mezzo piano* on F5, and distributes first line of text over four bars in two descending lines of two measures each. Downward trajectory from voice entrance illustrates “garlands.” Dipping minor third eighth notes highlight “hanging.”⁴ Howells adapts meter to suit phrase, as seen in fifth measure ($\frac{1}{4}$ accommodates elongation on “door” and “now”). Text setting throughout is predominantly syllabic. 2 + 2.

6-10/¹¹. – Phrase beginning overlaps end of previous; voice uses upper neighbor tone prior to step-wise descent to C5 “stay.” Nearly direct repeat of material of m1-5. Voice reenters a beat and a half earlier with eighth notes on “nor from your,” but hesitates for three beats on “leaves.” The dipping minor third on “quickly” is surrounded by longer rhythmic values. Meter change in m10 accommodates quantity of text; returns to $\frac{3}{4}$ in m11 and remains unchanged. Phrase ends by modulating up a whole step to D Major; “Tears!” receives a measure plus a quarter note. 3 + 2.

11-14. – Two measure piano introduction to new phrase overlaps previous, a continuation of accompaniment material established at beginning. Voice receives new melodic material at m12, a simple arc from A4 and back; “how many...” feigns surprise by the quantity of tears, which by now can be identified as the piano’s constant sixteenths. 2 + 2.

¹⁴/15-17. – Extended melisma on “lover’s” unfolds as harmony unexpectedly turns to Dm⁹ at beat one of m15; GM⁹ at first beat of m16 is sweetly descriptive of eyes brimming with tears. Downward minor third on “must” coincides with piano’s pause on Am. Voice continues in m17, alone and stoic; *diminuendo* on “shed” to phrase mark clears sound and bifurcates song.

m15			16		17
-	-	er’s	eyes	must	shed.
Dm ⁹	Em ⁷	Dm ⁶ ₅	GM ⁹	Am	(A)

18-21. – Following pause, piano reenters *mezzo piano*, and shifts harmonic area up a whole step to E Minor. Harmonic rhythm altered to quarter + half, two chords per bar with voicing extended to thirteenth. Sixteenths are again continuous, melodic shape and articulation match right hand. Contrary motion between hands is retained. Voice enters in m19; quickness afforded by sixteenth on “But” helps convey motion, narrative turn to the woman of the voice’s affection. Vocal line starts with upward major third, an endearingly wistful anacrusis for “opening.” Melodic emphasis on C5 “ye see” may briefly refer to opening pitch center. 2 + 2.

⁴ The object of the narrator’s affection is referred to as “her.” Gender identity of the narrator is unidentified.

22-26. – Harmonic area shifts up half step to F Minor, and harmonic rhythm is further slowed to one chord per bar. Ascending minor third, “Let slow-” hovers on Eb before “-ly drop these tears” initiate consecutive descending minor thirds. Sixteenths descend over two beats, rise for one; further illustrate tears dropping. Notational quirk in m23: piano chord is written as F#m¹³ while voice pitches stay in flats, perhaps an example of *augenmusik*. First and only instance of direct imitation between parts in m25-26; piano echoes descending quarters on “head” in left hand [Cb5 → Bb4 → Ab4]. Right hand in m26 ascends in octaves [Eb → F → G], undercurrent of sixteenths stops with *smorzando*. 2 + 2.

m22	23	24	25	26
Let slow - ly	drop these	tears up - on her	head	
Fm ¹³	F#m ¹³	Fm ¹³	D♭M ¹³	Abm ⁷

27-30. – Highest notes found in piece [Eb6 → F6 → G6] arrival at m27, set up the final two lines of text. Voice and piano almost start phrase together at first beat of m27. Voice ascends major ninth over three bars, G4 → A5. (All previous phrases stayed within a major sixth.) Upsurge culminates on “hair,” all motion ceases for first two beats of m29. Contrary motion in right hand descends F Major on *tenuto* quarters *assai espressivo*. Sixteenths remain conspicuously absent for entire phrase. Harmonic area is returning to C Major; dominant prolongation reiterated each bar through m30. Piano left hand grounds harmony with G♯, reiterated by bar. Sixteenths are noticeably absent.

³⁰/31-34. – Continuous sixteenths, melodic and harmonic material from first vocal phrase restart with “those tears.” Verb tense shifts to past perfect in final line suggesting the tears do eventually stop flowing. Vocal cadence over continuous motion conveys restlessness.

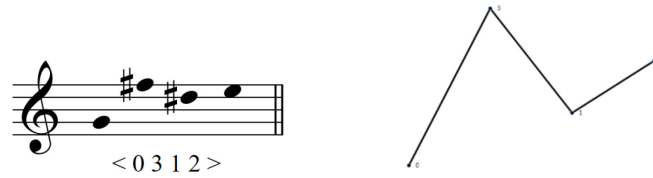
35-38. – Conclusion, piano solo. Sixteenths stop at third beat of m34, and composed-in *ritardando* beginning at m35. Right hand descent represents the final tear falling, emotions subsiding, and settles on unambiguous C Major.

Chapter 3: RECYCLING MELODIC CONTOUR

The analytical overviews from the preceding chapter provide structural and phrase-level information. Unlike composers of preceding generations, Howells's approach to the oboe sonata does not rely on traditional forms, i.e. sonata form governed by thematic areas or keys. Instead, the oboe sonata is organized by the cyclic use of melodic thematic material and large-scale repurposing of "O Garlands, Hanging by the Doors." In the discussion that follows, three melodic themes are identified and tracked throughout the sonata. Their usage is a unifying factor integral to the sonata's structure.

Howells presents a problem for analysis: melodic themes are aurally recognizable throughout, and with one exception, are not comprised of the same pitches and rhythm. Contour analysis will be used to identify each instance of themes A and B to negate the differences of specific pitches. A graph representing the shape of the theme results. Marvin and Laprade describe contour analysis as a means to compare two melodies of same or similar rhythm and shape with dissimilar pitch content. Without defining intervallic distance, a contour space (in this case, an instance of theme A or B) is comprised of c-pitches (pitches from a theme) temporally ordered and numbered from low to high (from 0 to N-1; N=total number of c-pitches). The outcome is a c-segment and is notated as consecutive c-pitches within angled brackets. A contour diagram is created by plotting N pitches in X and Y thus producing a graphical representation of the c-space. A c-subsegment is contiguous or non-contiguous temporally ordered c-pitches of a given c-segment.¹ See Example 3.

¹ Elizabeth West Marvin and Paul A. Laprade, "Relating Musical Contours: Extensions of a Theory for Contour," *Journal of Music Theory* 5, no. 2 (Autumn 1987), 227-228, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/843709>.



Example 3. C-segment < 0 3 1 2 > and contour diagram generated.

Contour analysis, more readily applied to non-tonal music, is considerably more involved beyond what I have shown. Howells's music is firmly rooted in traditional harmonic practices, so this simplified approach to contour analysis is appropriate. The contours of Theme A and B are established by their first usage. Therefore, all subsequent appearances of T/A and T/B will be in reference to these standard versions. In a few cases, elaborations and/or ornaments are omitted in c-space. A c-pitch may be repeated within a c-segment directly or in an adjacent octave. Each example of T/A and T/B is found with identifying information, c-segment(s), and contour diagram(s) following this discussion. Contour analysis of Theme C is not necessary; the relatively few occurrences of T/C explicitly reference the song, are lengthy, and are more easily compared. Discussion of T/C begins on page 61.

Twenty-two occurrences of Theme A are found in the sonata. T/A consists of csegA1 < 0 1 2 3 5 4 >. Eighteen (82%) of csegA1 do not deviate from < 0 1 2 3 5 4 >. The generic contour of csegA1 is four upward steps, an upward leap, and a downward step.² Most occurrences of csegA1 are immediately followed by csegA2 < 0 1 2 3 >, the generic contour of which is four upward steps. Sixteen (73%) csegA1 are immediately followed by csegA2. T/A is most prominent in the first movement, occurring twelve times. T/A is subsequently found twice in the second movement, six times in the third, and twice in the fourth movement. The piano receives the majority of T/A statements, sixteen (73%), while the oboe receives six (27%). See Table 2.

² As it relates to my contour analysis, a step is a distance of > 1 and a leap is a distance of < 1.

Table 2. Twenty-two occurrences of Theme A.

Location	csegA1	csegA2
I.2, piano	< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >	< 0 1 2 3 >
I.8, oboe	< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >	< 0 1 2 3 >
I.20, piano	< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >	< 0 1 2 3 >
I.34, oboe	< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >	< 0 1 2 3 >
I.79, oboe	< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >	< 0 1 2 3 >
I.106, piano	< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >	
I.108, piano	< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >	< 0 1 3 2 >
I.111, piano	< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >	
I.112, piano	< 0 1 2 3 4 6 5 >	
I.119, piano	< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >	
I.126, piano	< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >	
I.144, piano	< 0 1 2 4 3 >	< 0 1 3 2 >
II.21, piano	< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >	< 0 1 2 3 >
II.34, oboe	< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >	< 0 1 2 3 >
III.66, piano	< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >	< 0 1 2 3 >
III.74, piano	< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >	< 0 1 2 3 >
III.134, piano	< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >	
III.193, piano	< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >	< 0 1 2 3 >
III.257, piano	< 0 1 2 3 4 6 5 >	< 0 1 2 3 >
III.268, oboe	< 0 1 2 3 4 6 5 >	< 0 1 2 3 4 >
IV.3, piano	< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >	< 0 1 2 3 >
IV.10, oboe	< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >	< 0 1 2 3 >

Seventeen occurrences of Theme B are found in the sonata. T/B consists of csegB1 < 0 1 3 2 1 0 2 1 >. Nine (53%) of csegB1 do not deviate from < 0 1 3 2 1 0 2 1 >. The generic contour of csegB1 is an upward step and leap followed by four steps down, a leap up, and a step down. Most occurrences of csegB1 are immediately followed by csegB2 < 1 0 2 >, the generic contour of which is a downward step followed by an upward leap. Thirteen (76%) csegB1 are immediately followed by csegB2. Four (24%) statements of csegB2 are repeated thusly: csegB1 → csegB2 → csegB2. T/B occurs six times in the first movement, eleven times in the third, and is absent from the second and fourth. Contrasting T/A, the oboe receives the majority of T/B statements, eleven (65%), while the piano receives 6 (35%). See Table 3.

Table 3. Seventeen occurrences of Theme B.

Location	csegB1	csegB2	
I.38, oboe	< 0 1 3 2 1 0 2 1 >	< 1 0 2 >	
I.60, piano	< 0 1 5 4 3 2 4 3 >	< 1 0 2 >	
I.69, oboe	< 0 1 4 3 2 1 5 4 >	< 1 0 2 >	
I.78, oboe	< 0 1 3 2 1 0 2 1 >	< 1 0 2 >	< 1 0 2 >
I.84, oboe	< 0 1 3 2 1 0 2 1 >	< 1 0 2 >	< 1 0 2 >
I.123, piano	< 1 2 3 2 1 0 2 1 >		
III.7, oboe	< 0 1 3 2 1 0 2 1 >		
III.11, oboe	< 0 1 3 2 1 0 2 1 >		
III.125, oboe	< 0 1 3 2 1 0 2 1 >	< 1 0 2 >	
III.138, oboe	< 0 1 5 4 3 2 4 3 >	< 1 0 2 >	
III.182, piano	< 0 1 3 2 1 0 4 3 >	< 1 0 2 >	
III.182, oboe	< 0 1 3 2 1 0 2 1 >	< 1 0 2 >	
III.193, oboe	< 0 1 3 2 1 0 4 3 >	< 1 0 2 >	
III.197, piano	< 0 1 3 2 1 0 2 1 >	< 1 0 2 >	< 1 0 2 >
III.202, piano	< 0 1 4 3 1 0 2 1 >		
III.204, piano	< 0 1 5 4 3 2 7 6 >	< 1 0 2 >	
III.263, oboe	< 0 1 3 2 1 0 2 1 >	< 1 0 2 >	< 1 0 2 >

Section 1. Theme A

T/A I.2, piano

2 *mp*

< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >

< 0 1 2 3 >

T/A I.8, oboe

8 *p*

< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >

< 0 1 2 3 >

T/A I.20, piano

20

mf

< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >

< 0 1 2 3 >

T/A I.34, oboe

34

meno mosso

p

< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >

< 0 1 2 3 >

T/A I.79, oboe

79

mf poco agitato

< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >

< 0 1 2 3 >

T/A I.106, piano

106

mf

< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >

T/A I.108, piano

108

p

< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >

< 0 1 3 2 >

T/A I.111, piano

111

< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >

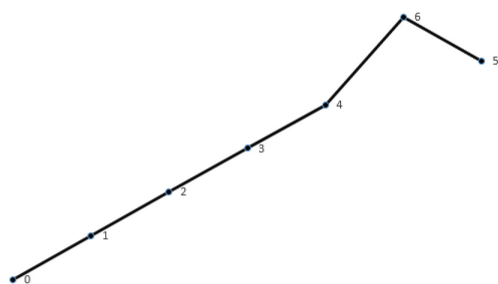
< 0 1 3 2 >

T/A I.112, piano

112

mp

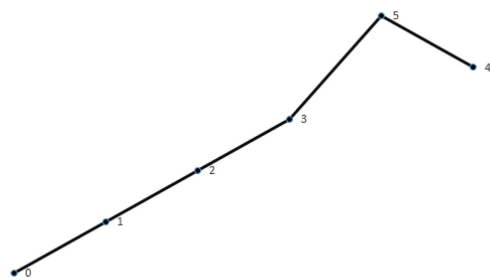
< 0 1 2 3 4 6 5 >



T/A I.126, piano

126

< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >



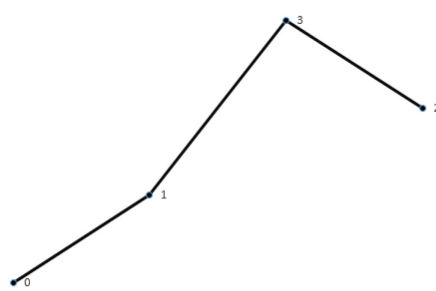
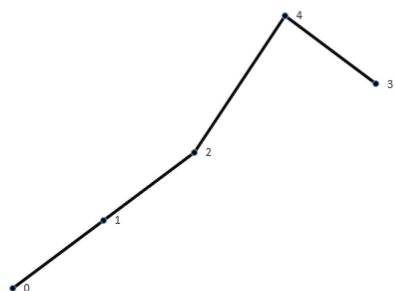
T/A I.144, piano

poco a poco ritardando - - - - - dim. - - - - -

144

< 0 1 2 4 3 >

< 0 1 3 2 >



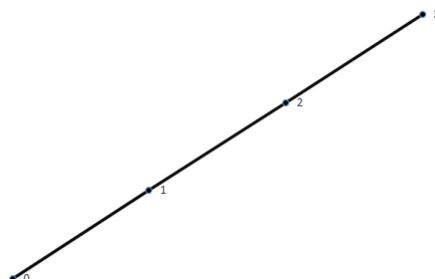
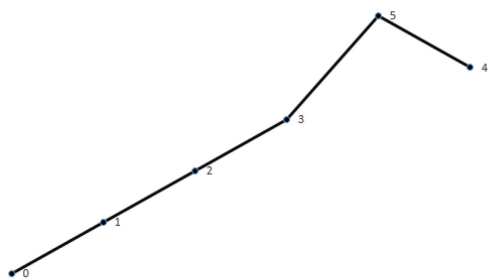
T/A II.21, piano

21

mp *smorz.*

< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >

< 0 1 2 3 >



T/A II.34, oboe

34 **poco rit. - - - a tempo**

p

< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >

< 0 1 2 3 >

T/A III.66, piano

66

p sub.

< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >

< 0 1 2 3 >

T/A III.74, piano

74

mf più sostenuto

< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >

< 0 1 2 3 >

T/A III.134, piano

134

mf più sostenuto

< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >

< 0 1 2 3 >

T/A III.193, piano

193

mp

< 0 1 2 3 5 4 >

< 0 1 2 3 >

T/A III.257, oboe

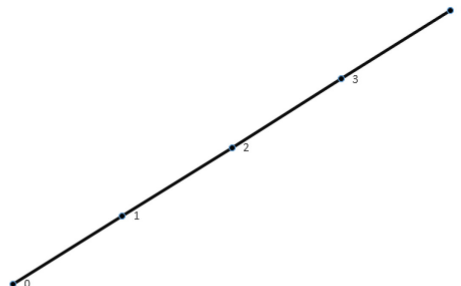
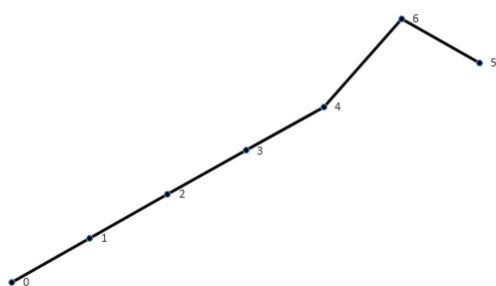
257

pp

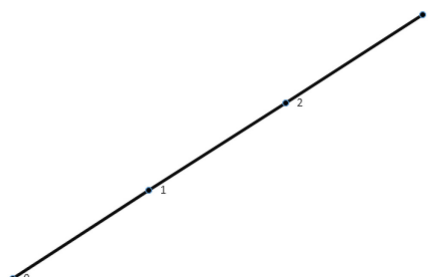
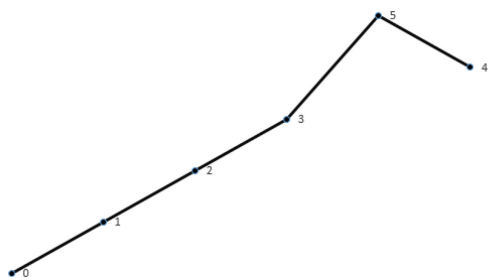
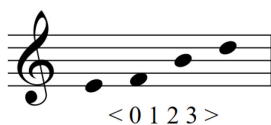
< 0 1 2 3 4 6 5 >

< 0 1 2 3 >

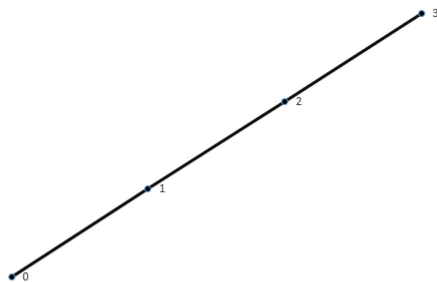
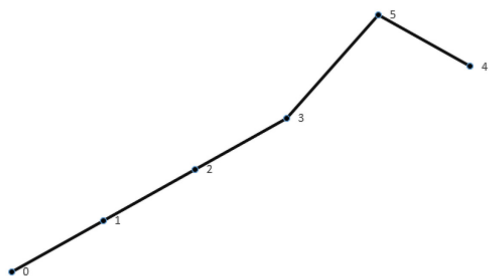
T/A III.268, oboe



T/A IV.3, piano



T/A IV.10, oboe



Section 2. Theme B

T/B I.38, oboe

38 **più animato, poco a poco** (♩ = 96)

mp *poco*

< 0 1 3 2 1 0 2 1 >

< 1 0 2 >

T/B I.60, piano

60 *8va*

slentando p pp

< 0 1 5 4 3 2 4 3 >

< 1 0 2 >

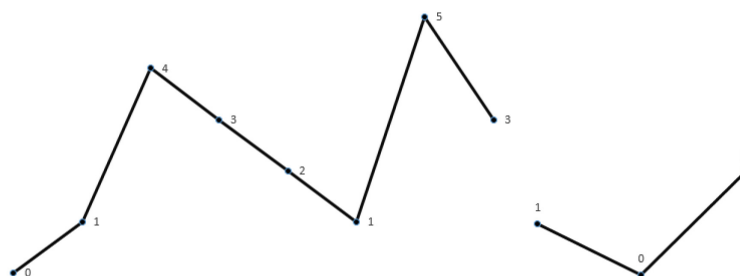
T/B I.69, oboe

69 (rit. - - - - -)

p

<0 1 4 3 2 1 5 4>

<1 0 2>



T/B I.78, oboe

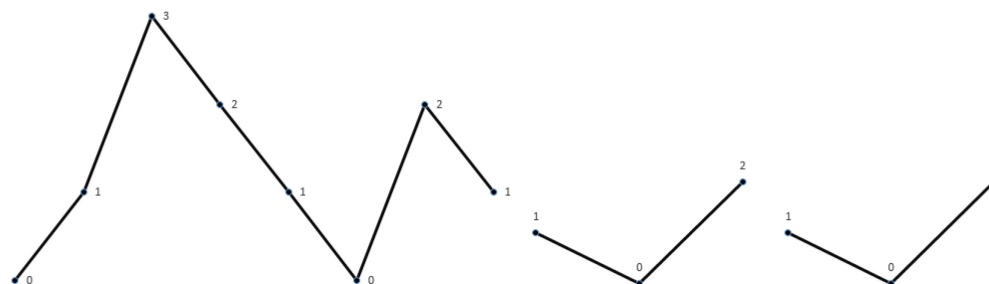
78

f *mf poco agitato*

<0 1 3 2 1 0 2 1>

<1 0 2>

<1 0 2>



T/B I.84, oboe

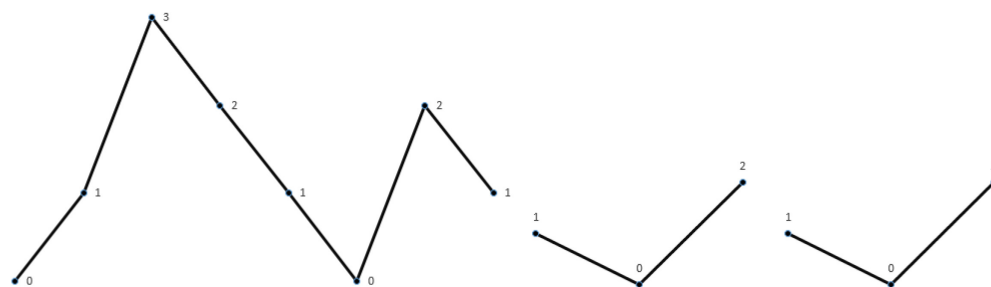
84

>> *cresc.* **f**

< 0 1 3 2 1 0 2 1 >

< 1 0 2 >

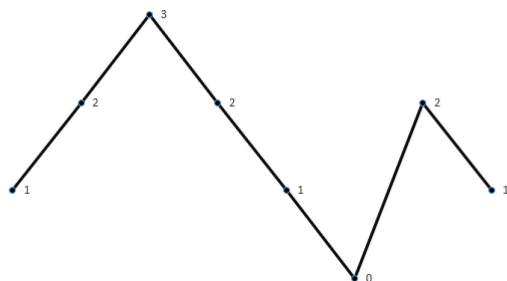
< 1 0 2 >



T/B I.123, piano

123

< 1 2 3 2 1 0 2 1 >



T/B III.7, oboe

7

T/B III.125, oboe

125

pp dolce, placido

< 0 1 3 2 1 0 2 1 >

< 1 0 2 >

T/B III.138, oboe

138

pp

< 0 1 5 4 3 2 4 3 >

< 1 0 2 >

T/B III.182, piano

182 **Con moto (ma placido)**

pp

<0 1 3 2 1 0 4 3>

<1 0 2>

T/B III.182, oboe

182 **Con moto (ma placido)**

p

<0 1 3 2 1 0 2 1>

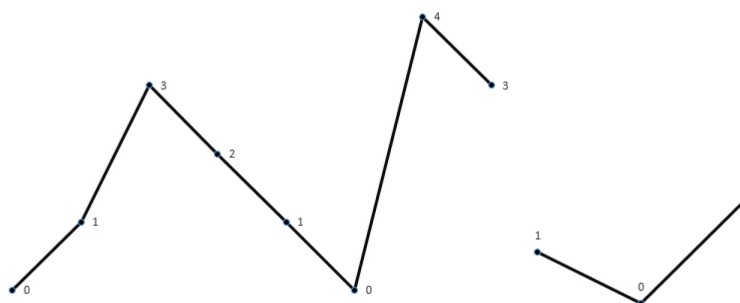
<1 0 2>

T/B III.193, oboe

193 *poco più Vivo* *poco - a - poco - - .*

mf

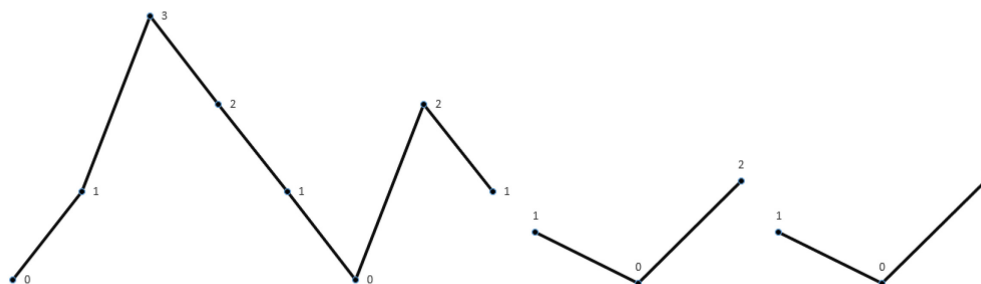
<0 1 3 2 1 0 4 3> <1 0 2>



T/B III.197, piano

197 *accel. - - - - - sempre*

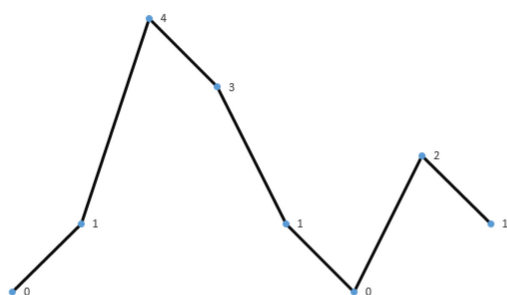
<0 1 3 2 1 0 2 1> <1 0 2> <1 0 2>



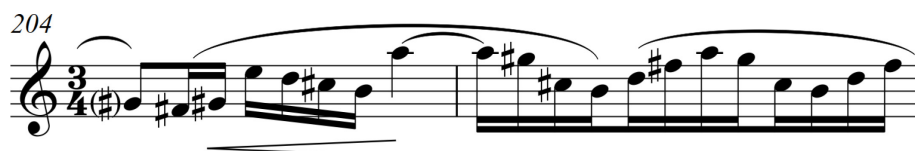
T/B III.202, piano



< 0 1 4 3 1 0 2 1 >



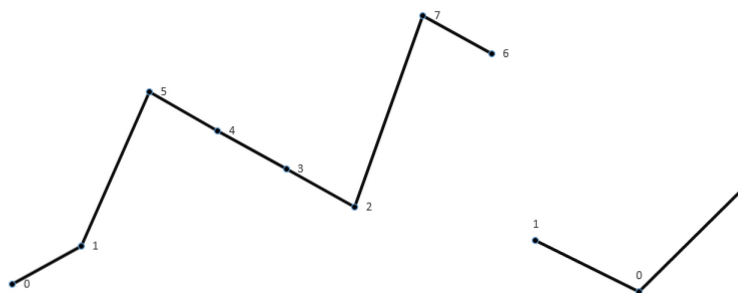
T/B III.204, piano



< 0 1 5 4 3 2 7 6 >



< 1 0 2 >



T/B III.263, oboe

263 (un poco più movimento) accel. - - .

p *cresc.* *f* *mp*

< 0 1 3 2 1 0 2 1 > < 1 0 2 > < 1 0 2 >

Theme C – “O Garlands, Hanging by the Doors”

The obvious example of thematic recycling in the oboe sonata is Howells’s use of his song of 1920, “O Garlands, Hanging by the Doors.” In the discussion which follows, T/C refers to the song in its entirety. Descriptive analysis is found in the preceding chapter. Structurally, the song is through-composed, and phrasing is organized by the text. The text is an anonymous Greek poem.³

- 1 O Garlands, hanging by the door now stay,
- 2 Nor from your leaves too quickly shake away
- 3 My dew of tears!
- 4 How many such, ah me!
- 5 A lover’s eyes must shed.
- 6 But when the opening of these doors ye see,
- 7 Let slowly drop these tears upon her head
- 8 That so her golden hair may drink deep
- 9 Those tears that I did weep.

Howells’s use of T/C is most direct in the second movement of the oboe sonata but not an outright copy. See Examples 4-6. Several important differences include: 1) transposition from the original C Major down a half step to B Major; 2) generally thicker texture and more active accompaniment; 3) larger range utilized by the oboe (voice G4 to A5 versus oboe B3 to D#6); 4) added transitions between lines 5 and 6 featuring T/A (II.21-25 and II.34-35); 5) lines 6 and 7 are repeated (II.36-44); 6) significant addition of material (II.52-64) in the style and character of T/C; and 7) the ending is longer and more elaborate.

³ The published score does not indicate the poem’s source beyond what I have listed.

2 *mp*

Voice

O Gar - lands, hang-ing by the door_ now_ stay,_ Nor from your leaves

4 *p* *poco* *pp* *p*

Oboe

8
_ too quick-ly shake a - way my dew of tears!_ How ma-ny such_ ah

10 *mf* *poco più f*

14 me! a lov_ _ _ er's_ eyes must shed.

16 *dim.* - - - - -

Example 4. Comparing voice and oboe lines of G.2-17 and II.4-21.

19
Voice
But when the op-en-ing of these doors ye see, Let slow-ly

27
Oboe
mf 3

23
drop these tears up-on her head

31

Example 5. Comparing voice and oboe lines of G.19-26 and II.27-34.

27
Voice
That so her gold-en hair may drink deep those

45
Oboe
pp teneramente *poco*

31
tears that I did weep

49
pp *poco cresc.*

Example 6. Comparing voice and oboe lines of G.27-34 and II.45-52.

T/C is briefly found in one additional location, III.218-223. The melodic contour across the song, second, and third movements is nearly identical in spite of differences of tempo, meter, and expressive markings. See Example 7.

2 *mp*

Voice

4 *p*

Oboe

poco

pp

218 *ff*

Oboe

Example 7. Comparing voice and oboe lines of G.2-6, II.4-9, and III.218-223.

An interesting feature of III.218-247 is Howells's use of a unison melodic fragment, a device rarely used in the sonata. The fragment, stated in unison (in the same octave) by oboe and piano occurs at III.226-227. Several bars later at III.230-231, the fragment is misaligned by two and a half beats, stated first by the piano. At III.238-239, the fragment is completely decoupled, played only by the oboe. See Example 8.

218
Oboe
Piano
ff

223
f ≤ 3 *mf*

229

235
f *mf*

240
dim. - - - - *sempre* - - - -

244
rall. - - - -

Example 8. Decoupling of unison fragment between oboe and piano, III.218-247.

Finally, the elaboration at II.49-64 returns in the fourth movement at m21-37. This is a direct repeat transposed down a whole step and subtle differences in tempo and dynamics. See Example 9.

49 *a tempo*

pp *poco cresc.* - - - - -

21 *a tempo*

con anima *poco*

estino - - - - -

estino al fine - - - - -

Assai tranquillo

- - - - - *rit.* - - - - - *Più lento*

pp

Example 9. Comparing oboe lines of II.49-64 and IV.21-37.

Chapter 4: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS FOR OBOISTS

Difficult Passages

Howells's sonata presents the oboist with a wide variety of technical challenges. The discussion which follows represents the most demanding moments of the piece. My suggestions for practice and performance may be applied to the sonata in order to help make its performance easier. For each selection, several items will be addressed. First, I will explain why the excerpt is difficult. Second, the expressive role of the excerpt will be balanced with context. Finally, I will provide comments and suggestions for practice and performance which focus on oboe technique. Refer to Chapter 1 for general information on Howells's compositional style. Narrative, phrase-level analysis is found in Chapter 2. Contour analysis of T/A and T/B and examination of the recycling of T/C is found in Chapter 3.

Unlike previous chapters, I will refer to pitches in "oboe vernacular." The chart below shows how I refer to pitches orally, as if in a lesson with a student. This system of identification is not necessarily universal, but are nevertheless an important component of how oboists communicate. See Example 10.



Example 10. Range of Howells's Sonata expressed in oboe vernacular.

The standard model instrument for American oboists is the semi-automatic conservatoire oboe. For fingerings, refer to Martin Schuring's excellent chart in, *Oboe Art and Method*.¹ Procedure for discussing fingerings is as follows: from the oboist's point of view looking from the top down; single purpose keys are addressed by name (ex. "banana key") and main finger keys by hand and number (ex. RH2). I use

¹ Martin Schuring, *Oboe Art and Method* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 211-214.

this nomenclature to avoid cumbersome labels such as, “right hand little finger.” Thumb always refers to left hand thumb; right thumb is preoccupied with the thumb rest. Depending on context, accidentals will be used interchangeably for fingerings. Additional discussion of breathing technique is found in Appendix A. Discussion on the use and consideration of alternate fingerings is found in Appendix B. Discussion of markings found in the published score is found in Appendix C. It is recommended that this chapter be used in close consultation with the score and narrative analysis from Chapter 2.

I.45-50

Difficulties: Awkward fingerings; large downward leaps; quickness; crescendo to high E.

Expressive purpose: Continue upward trajectory of line beginning at m38, sudden and dramatic change of direction in m46 leading to high E, apex of phrase; most active moment in first movement so far.

Comments: Move your air [support] through the line and especially through larger intervals. Alternate left low D# to right half hole D# in m47. Alternating left and right hands, where possible, is useful for negotiating passages in five or more sharps or flats. In the case of the D#s in m47, I find it easier to differentiate the change of octaves with a change of hand position. This isn't necessary, of course, the only requirement is to open the half hole. Save the majority of the crescendo in m47 for the last beat. Hook over octave G# to half hole D# and muster energy to high E.

I.79-96

Difficulties: Saving energy for the high F arrival at m90 while creating *poco agitato* from low D at m79; large interval leaps under slurs; extremities of range (m90 is one of two high Fs in the sonata); security of pitch and tone.

Expressive purpose: Linking slower, softer, and delicate T/B from m66 to *fortissimo sonore e ritmico* at m102, *poco agitato*.

Comments: Use the grand pause at m79 to catch a good *out and in* breath. Breathe *out and in* again at first beat of m84. Do not breathe again until after high F m91. It is easier to keep the line intact without disrupting your embouchure. To assist slurring octave G to high D m86, RH3 ring may be used (press D key while keeping hole open). This may not be necessary if your oboe is equipped with a Philadelphia key (high D facilitator key). Even when my reed is sufficiently up-to-pitch, I like using the RH3 ring knowing that I "can't miss" a high D. Carry depth of tone into high C#, D, E, and F from half hole C# in m87. Save some dynamic range for conclusion of section at m102. Alternate left high E to right high F m89-90 and return to left high E at m91.

I.131-143

Difficulties: Fortissimo, accented offbeats must be clear and ringing like bells; m133 for awkward fingering; equalizing fortissimo across three octaves.

Expressive purpose: Three iterations of offbeat bell tones of similar downward contour are linked by afterthoughts of sixteenths and lead to the oboe's calming and eventual closing of the movement.

Comments: Match offbeats for character, tone, and quality of accent. Plan for how the body of each note should sound (full and vibrant) following the initial articulation, and anchor yourself there. The accent does not lay outside the boundary of good tone. Change the articulation of m133 and m140 to match. Avoid forked F throughout this excerpt to match power and tone of surrounding notes. Remain fortissimo until after the downbeat of m143. Preserve your rhythmic integrity in m141-142, and do not slow until Howells instructs at the downbeat of m144.

I.144-152

Difficulties: Upward leaps, evenness of line; breathing plan prior to and throughout; change of character from preceding fortissimo, control and stability of embouchure, pitch, and tone; gradual diminuendo through ascending figures; negotiating the break over high C \flat → D \flat → B \flat .

Expressive purpose: Calming transition between *sonore e ritmico* and piano's coda, conclusion of the first movement.

Comments: Have your breathing plan in place, well-rehearsed, and ingrained so that it may be relied upon. Do not diminuendo too much too soon. Stay louder for longer through these measures to make the end *piano ma assai espressivo* easier. Give more emphasis to the lower note of large leaps and less to upper to equalize and preserve the beauty of the line. Use the firmness of your air support to cradle the line and keep it unbroken. Determine the quality desired for your final three notes (up-to-pitch, ringing, shimmering, and effortless) and save enough air and energy to make it happen. De-emphasize last two high D \flat s to keep them within the line. Listen to the quarter notes in the piano's left hand to gauge the ritard. Additional discussion of breathing technique is found in Appendix A.

II.45-74

Difficulties: Long and taxing, breathing plan essential; delicate maneuvering over half hole break at important moments, ending similar to I.144-152, long, ascending *diminuendo*.

Expressive purpose: Expansion and elongation of original structure and material of "O Garlands" and transition to *assai tranquillo*.

Comments: Cultivate richness of tone for middle B. It could easily be too thin or bright compared with its surroundings. Breathe *out and in* at m44, *out* (not too much) at m54, *out and in* at m58, and *out and in* at m60. Preserve loudness of *poco crescendo* at m52-54 following the small hairpin at m57-58. This will ensure the *estino* at m60-63 is possible (it is tempting to follow the line down too far in m58). Maintain the line with continuous air support. The line is buoyant counterpoint to the deep rumble of pedal B \flat from piano left hand. From m58, a long ascent to the phrase end is briefly interrupted by dip to low D and E. Color your tone with vibrato. Measures 62-64 reference I.144-152. Be aware the rests at m64-65 and m69 pass quickly; breathe *out and in* and be ready for final, calm phrases.

III.56-77

Difficulties: Awkward fingerings in B \flat Minor to avoid the use of forked F; *sforzando piano* at m58 and m66; quick breathing; rhythm.

Expressive purpose: Legato phrases juxtapose the primary staccato texture of the third movement.

Comments: Maintain fiery energy throughout soft measures with active support to enhance dramatic character and contrast. A quick *out and in* breath at m61 and m69 are worth the effort; the next substantial rest isn't until m87. Slide from LH F to LH E \flat in m59 and keep other Fs in the left hand. Forked F, on my oboe, reduces the power of the line in this key and dynamic. Avoiding forked F also increases clarity in piano. Additional discussion of forked F can be found in Appendix B. Measures 58-60 and 66-68 are a typical Howells treatment of a repeated melodic contour. For the oboist, there is little

opportunity to rely on previously learned material; melodic contours are aurally repeated, not literally. Energize rhythm of offbeats within line to propel forward and obscure strong beats.

III.95-114

Difficulties: Deft use of the banana key; trills; ending a long and taxing section.

Expressive purpose: Ending Part 1 of third movement with great flourish, virtuosity; final notes reflect I.148-152 and II.62-64.

Comments: The use of the banana key² (also known as the alternate C key or Gillet key) should be practiced enough so that it feels normal. On standard conservatoire oboes playing conventional repertoire, its sole function is to facilitate a low [C → D \flat] trill. The placement of the key, outboard of right hand third finger, is not user friendly: it must be depressed with third finger while also covering the D key hole. Use the tip of third finger to touch the banana key, and cover the D key hole just above the first knuckle. The same technique is used with other keys on a regular basis, such as using RH1 on the F \sharp and RH A \flat keys or LH1 on the side octave and half hole. Practice this movement out of context, and find uses for the banana key in daily practice material.

In playing m100-103, get onto the banana key at the last low D \flat of m100 and stay on until moving to the low E \flat in m103. Sliding over to RH E \flat helps move completely off the banana key and back into normal third finger position for the D key. Lifting off the third finger on the way to low F \flat resets hand position.

The trills in m108-111 are gnarly. Use LH E \flat to trill [E \flat → F] and RH A \flat to trill [A \flat → B \flat]. Focus on the first grace note following the trill: it's outside of the trill and should be audible. The trills are not measured, nor are they frantic. Save some energy for the final three notes of the phrase. M111-114 are in diminuendo, but do not become too soft.

III.168-82

Difficulties: Fast, low articulation; large leaps under slurs.

Expressive purpose: Brief reprise of the third movement opening, and transition to new material.

Comments: Use legato articulation to help preserve the line. Bring out the lower notes of the downward slurs. If choosing to use the original slurs in m177-182, use Sarah Francis's markings as a practice guide. See Appendix C for additional discussion of markings found in the score.

III.206-216

Difficulties: Endurance due to location; dynamic levels; articulation.

Expressive purpose: Flurry of activity in a quasi-cadenza conclusion of Part 3.

² Goossens's oboe has a LH C \sharp key in the LH F location.

Comments: Howells suggests grouping arpeggios by beat in m207, and the same can be applied to m209-214. The effect is wildness, glossolalia. Dynamic level is not specific in score; this should be powerful, edgy, and noisy. Arrival at the *fortissimo* high B must crescendo without sounding over-blown. Like III.108-111, make the lower grace note audible within the trills. Follow the line from m207-209 upward through the trills [A5 → B5^{tr} → C6^{tr} → D6 → E6].

III.248-IV.2

Difficulties: Pacing of *rubato*, *tenuto*, *fermata*, and tempo.

Expressive purpose: Oboe cadenza.

Comments: Difficulty arises when pairing the ruminative quality of the cadenza with the practical need to keep moving. The driving, shifting meter throughout the third movement is replaced by spacious, sticky figurations which dwell. Howells issues nineteen different tempo/rhythmic markings to the oboe over twenty-two measures, m248-269; he is unambiguous. A well-crafted breathing plan will help prevent dwelling too long on fermatas. I am not suggesting to move quickly through the cadenza, rather, to be mindful of wearing out one's welcome. Move LH1 onto plate in m258 to secure movement from B to A# later in the measure. Measure 268 is nostalgic for the opening of the first movement and foreshadows the fourth. The last four notes must lead to the high C at IV.1, *con tutta forza*.

IV.10-45

Difficulties: Endurance; detail in phrasing; revisiting old material; as in previous movements, *estino al fine* through rising line.

Expressive purpose: Reminiscence and conclusion.

Comments: The entirety of the fourth movement is dependent upon how successfully you manage exhaustion throughout the sonata. Even under ideal reed and instrument circumstances, the oboist is subjected to endurance challenges owing to phrase length, embouchure stability through disjunct melody, and Howells's wide ranging expressive request. Any material directly referenced from previous movements should bear resemblance to its predecessor. Embellishments must sound special, matter-of-fact, but should not bring undue attention to themselves. Tempo is slower than corresponding first movement and faster than second movement sections. Breathe at four places: *out and in* m16, m22, m30, and m32. The goal is to make the final ascent effortless, m32-37. High B and A must ring, with iridescence and fullness through diminuendo. Adequately prepare downward leap from octave E to low C, m31-32. Oboe's last statement, m40-45, is *pianissimo* in mood, but in reality must be louder to sustain diminuendo over four measures. The final half hole C# tone must be rich; use the preceding eighth notes make the conclusion sound inevitable.

Chapter 5: CONCLUSION

Herbert Howells was busy in 1942. He was teaching at the Royal College of Music and St. Paul's Girls' School, and he was well into his organ tenure at St. John's College. He still labored under the loss of his son, Michael, seven years prior. England was enveloped in the second world war of his lifetime. Yet by August of that year, Howells completed his Sonata for Oboe and Piano. Léon Goossens, the work's dedicatee, rejected it. If not for Christopher Palmer's intervention decades later, Howells would have kept the piece hidden from view, perhaps forever.

Goossens rejected the sonata because of its structure. Indeed, the piece presents complications for analysis and performance. Howells, as was his compositional style, favored complex tonal and modal harmonies, long and asymmetrical phrases, and recycling of melodic themes over obvious harmonic and melodic devices or archetypal forms. Through Tovey's narrative style analysis, I have detailed the sonata and "O Garlands Hanging by the Doors" to provide a clear description of what happens throughout each piece. In addition, I used contour theory to identify and illustrate disparate recycling of two principal melodic themes. I further showed how melodic material generated from "O Garlands" was reused in the second, third, and fourth sonata movements. It is through this melodic recycling that Howells achieves thematic continuity.

Finally, I addressed performance considerations for the oboist. General topics of oboe technique discussed, accompanied by specific commentary on selected difficult passages. Appropriate strategies for lengthy phrases and awkward moments are necessary even for the most advanced oboist. The purpose of my analysis is to illuminate Howells's complicated score, and my suggestions for practice and performance are intended to help make things easier.

APPENDIX A: BREATHING STRATEGY IN DETAIL

The following discussion is a detailed breathing strategy applied to the opening moments of the sonata. As determined by harmonic analysis in Chapter 2, I.8-33 represent seven phrases. However, the case can be made that, emotionally, m8-33 represent one phrase. This does not imply that all twenty six measure should occur within one breath.¹ Let's consider I.8-33 as a blueprint for creating a sustainable breathing plan.

During the piano's introduction, consciously increase your rate of breathing in and out, using the time to stock up on oxygen. This may be applied to any future rests as well as time between movements. My breath before the first note will not be large; I'll avoid filling my lungs to capacity unless it's necessary. Too much air could create unnecessary tension, resulting in a "pressed" or "overloaded" tone quality. My instructions from Howells are *placido*, *teneramente*, *ma con moto*, and *piano*: a moderate breath helps facilitate the character, while providing enough air to the first *out* breath at m16.

I choose to breathe *out* after the octave F# in m16 because it ends a slur, precedes a change in register, and its far enough from the beginning.² I have enough time following the dotted quarter for a quick *out* breath, and I can take an *in* breath following the tied half note D in m18. I prefer, where possible, to pair *in* and *out* breaths with similar musical features. Here, the groups of rising thirds and slurs provide ample cover for breathing.

Alternatively, one could choose to breathe *out* at the eighth rest at m12 and *in* the sixteenth rest at m14. It's reasonable to prefer breathing on a rest. However, carrying that preference throughout the piece is untenable, so it's advisable to establish acceptable characteristics of how the notes immediately preceding and following a breath should sound. At m18, the direction of the phrase is upward, so the half

¹ A familiar and similar issue is found in the exposition of Richard Strauss's Oboe Concerto.

² Musical considerations aside, where and how to breathe can be somewhat subjective. I have a tendency toward long phrasing in part because I'm physically comfortable with it, though it's important to note that not everyone is. Ultimately, the best breathing plan is sensitive to the composer's line, the oboist's expression, and what's physically possible.

hole D must end upward. Cover the breath by taking time from the longer D, not the shorter C#. The latter would sound awkward and, disjointed. The D must sound complete within its surroundings and not short-changed. I find it easier to accomplish these breaths in m16 and m18 rather than the shorter rests in m12 or m14. Also, the energy expended in breathing lends an urgency to the phrase I find beneficial.

Following the *in* breath at m18, my next breath is following the tied half hole D at m27. Here, I will breathe *out* to prepare for a substantial *in* breath at m29 after the tied A#. As in m16 and 18, the same rhythmic figure is used for breathing. The *out* breath need only be big enough to expel some – not all – air. A new consideration arises at m29: this breath must take me from *forte sonore* to *piano diminuendo* and the end of the phrase. Approaching the phrase end, *diminuendos*, and descending to low D \sharp with ease is facilitated by the previous two breaths. Just as important, I do not want to feel winded at this point, so that the phrase end feels like a closing, not an escape.

Some compromises must be made in choosing where and how to breathe, but hopefully this can be done without sacrificing crucial musical elements of a composition. It's possible to play Howells's score literally through the use of circular breathing, but I do not find that necessary. Circular breathing technique can be immensely useful as a way to alleviate excess pressure prior to a "real" breath. It does not, however, give your embouchure a break in the way a "real" breath can.³ The unfortunate side-effect of circular breathing is that it's noticeable insofar as your audience notices a lack of breaths. This could diminish the fact that breathing and playing the oboe are inextricably linked. Howells, who composed so much for voice and included a vocal work within the oboe sonata, is insisting on a vocal quality.

Another concern for breathing is register, an interesting example of which is found at m48. It's certainly possible to breathe following the high E, and a case can be made to support doing so. However, you risk losing embouchure placement for the following high D. It's easier to breathe at m50 following the low A. A similar situation occurs at m91: a breath is necessary following the high F. It makes sense

³ Circular breathing is necessary in repertoire which requires it.

to do so in context and matches m95. One must be aware of the embouchure placement for the subsequent high E \sharp and maintain forte. Use the breath to aid upward momentum through the eighth rest at m131 [C6 \rightarrow Eb6] and the sixteenth rest at m134 [Bb5 \rightarrow Db6].

One's breathing plan is especially important to similar moments in I.144-152, II.58-64, and IV.30-37. These sections are difficult because they come at the end of long, taxing successions of phrases, they gradually ascend, and they gradually become softer. For the first movement example, it is necessary to arrive at m143 refreshed, not uncomfortable from a lack of oxygen. A successful breathing plan instituted throughout the preceding section (from m102) allows this. Musically and emotionally, one must begin shedding energy at m144. To aid in doing so, I breath *out and in* at m137, *out* at m143, and *in* at m147. I want to feel as though I have air left over. It is important to practice in large sections to learn how the breathing plan will feel.

In sum, breathe according to a plan. Howells's sonata is too long and taxing not to, and having well-established breathing locations is an easy way to increase security and comfort from one phrase to the next. Plan to breathe *out*, *in*, or both, choosing locations which make sense with musical and physical needs. Find moments which require the most energy as well as those which require getting rid of energy. Circular breathe as it suits you, but be conscious of Howells's phrasing. Léon Goossens's concerns over the structure of the sonata may have been referring to the extraordinary phrase length and associated difficulty with playability. He, too, may have been concerned with where and how to breathe.

APPENDIX B: ON FORKING F

Every note on the oboe has an identifiable and characteristic timbre. This varies somewhat amongst different makes and models of oboes. Modern oboes, due in large part to complex, closed-hole keys, have a relatively even quality of tone across the primary working range, low B \flat to high C.¹ The most readily apparent exception to even tonal characteristics is the difference between forked and regular [standard] F using the F key. Regular F (in both octaves) is stable, powerful, clear, and ringing. By comparison, forked F is more covered, resistant, and dull, and potentially fuzzy in the low octave. The F resonance key, opened with forked F, mitigates the natural resistance and brightens the tone. Some oboes omit the F resonance key altogether or have the option of keeping it closed permanently with an adjustment screw.

I am not of the opinion that forked F should be avoided at all times. Rather, it's important to have the option and the technique of forked F to facilitate difficult passages. Context, such as key, surrounding pitches, range, and color desired, is ultimately what must inform the question, "Which F?" In fast passages, do what is easiest – your audience will never notice. In slower passages, where F is clearly audible and/or significant, match the color of the surrounding notes. A good example of choosing color over technical facility is found at the *Andante tranquillo* solo from Samuel Barber's First Symphony (1943). The oboe begins on low B and slurs to low E \sharp . It's easier to play forked E \sharp , but one may prefer the clarity of regular E \sharp , requiring sliding the third finger from D to F keys. Some models of oboe have a roller on the lower side of the F key to make this sliding motion easier. Good options for practicing F technique include the [I \rightarrow V⁷] exercises from *Vade-Mecum of the Oboist*,² playing with and without

¹ This discussion also applies to oboe d'amore and English horn with slight differences in mechanism.

² Andraud, Albert J., ed. *Vade-Mecum of the Oboist: 230 Selected Technical and Orchestral Studies for Oboe and English Horn*, 9th ed. (San Antonio: Southern Music Co., 1940), 3-4. These exercises are adapted from Matheus André Reichert's (1830-80) *7 Exercices Journaliers pour la Flûte*, Op. 5.

forked F, and Gillet's forked F studies from *Vingt Minute d'Étude*.³ "Which F?" is ultimately a musical decision made by individual oboists according to the demands of the score and personal tastes.

³ Gillet, Fernand. *Vingt Minutes d'Étude: Exercices Journaliers pour la Technique du Hautbois* (Paris: Alphonse Leduc, n.d.), 27.

APPENDIX C: ON MARKINGS FOUND IN THE SCORE

According to the preface in the Novello edition, the oboe sonata as published is a faithful representation of Howells's original. Peter Dickinson made several changes to the piano part, mostly for visual clarity or continuity with corresponding material. Sarah Francis made editorial markings in the oboe part denoted by a vertical line through slurs. Francis's edits are suggestions for performance.

The timeline of the sonata's origin, and Howells's personality, suggest that when Howells's first presented Goossens with the sonata in 1942, it was a finished, or at least mostly finished, work. Either Goossens's rejection was cause for the work to be shelved, or Howells was confident enough in the sonata to keep it despite Goossens's criticism. Howells was known to be highly self-critical and would have likely tossed the piece if it were not to his standard. According to Goossens, Howells said he'd "have another go at it." If accurate, the implication is that Howells was open to amending the work. What remains unknown is if the published version is the very same Howells delivered to Goossens.

It's reasonable to assume a degree of flexibility in the printed articulations as they are vague at times. Other expressive markings, however, are numerous and detailed. Several writers have suggested Howells corrected Goossens's structural concerns of the oboe sonata by composing his Clarinet Sonata, HH 251 (1946). Similarities aside, why would it have been in Howells's interest to completely abandon the sonata? For example, Francis's additions to I.89-96 are practical and sensible in context; reasonable alterations such as these could not have been the basis for Goossens's rejection. I find it puzzling that Goossens would have objected to Howells's sonata because of "structure," as prior chapters reveal just how thoroughly organized the sonata is. Howells's neo-romantic style and treatment of melody surely would have appealed to Goossens.¹ In spite of Howells's and Goossens's reservations, the sonata is a worthy addition to the oboe's 20th century repertoire.

¹ Leon Goossens and Edwin Roxburgh, *Oboe*, Yehudi Menuhin Music Guides (New York, Schirmer Books, 1977), 158.

APPENDIX D: PERMISSIONS

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O Garlands, Hanging By The Doors	Herbert Howells/Scott Crowne (ed.)

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